MARVEL KNIGHTS

BLACK WIDOW
THE COMPLETE COLLECTION

PARENTAL ADVISORY! NOT FOR KIDS!

DEVIN GRAYSON • GREG RUCKA
J.G. JONES • SCOTT HAMPTON • IGOR KORDEY

MARVEL

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BLACK WIDOW
THE COMPLETE COLLECTION

"THE ITSY-BITSY SPIDER"

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THE ITSY-BITSY SPIDER 1

J.G. JONES & AVALON'S ANDY TROY

#1 variant cover

J.G. JONES & DAVE KEMP

#1 Dynamic Forces variant cover

RHAPASTAN.
YESTERDAY.

BLACK WIDOW
IN: THE ITSY-BITSY SPIDER
UNINVITED PART 1 OF 3
case report compiled by DEVIN GRAYSON
visual documentation by J.G. JONES
infrared color analysis by DAVE KEMP
top secret coding provided by RICHARD STARKINGS & COMICRAFT/WA
submitted for recommendation of action to: JIMMY PALMIOTTI and JOE QUESADA
copied to field agent supervisor, NANCI DAKESIAN
and bureau chief, BOB HARRAS
EXCELLENT. THE SERUM WORKS EVEN BETTER THAN REPORTED.
I'LL TAKE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN MAKE.
VERY WELL. LET'S DISCUSS TRANSPORT...
...ELSEWHERE.

Avengers Assemble
BY Louise Lane
blah, Blah Blah
LSU TIGERS WILL
BEAT THE HELL
OUT OF YOUR
SORRY-ASS
TEAM
SAN FRANCISCO MAGAZINE
$3.50
SAN FRANCISCO'S HOT CRIME-FIGHTING COUPLE ON THE OUTS?
IS THIS THE END OF THE BLACK WIDOW/ DAREDEVIL TEAM?
BRRRNG BRRRNG
BRRRT BRRRT
I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE YOU SAID "YES," MY NATALIA! LOVE ALWAYS, ALEXI

NEW YORK.
TODAY.
HELLO? Oh... ZDRASTVOOYTYE. DA... HARASHO. YA PANEEMAYO.
HELLO? YES, GO AHEAD... A NEW BIO-WEAPON, YES... DR. DIDIER INES? IS HE THE INVENTOR?... NO, THE NAME DOESN'T RING ANY BELLS...
RHAPASTAN. RIGHT. UNDERSTOOD.
SHUFF
KNOCK KNOCK
FRIEND OR FOE?
Hm. THAT DEPENDS. IF I'M A FOE, DO I GET TIED UP?

WELL, YOU'RE LOOKING PARTICULARLY *LOVELY* TODAY.
I'D IMAGINE.
SOMEHOW, MATT, WHEN FALLING OFF *YOUR* CHARMING LIPS, THESE JOKES NEVER GET *OLD.*
YOU'RE SWEET... BUT *AGITATED.* A HEART-RATE LIKE THAT'S NOT *HEALTHY,* YOU KNOW.
SOMETHING WRONG?
NOTHING *SERIOUS.* JUST FEELING A LITTLE *MORTAL* THESE DAYS.
From the Office of Dr. Sullivan
2040 Circle Plaza, Suite 30
New York, NY 10011
Natasha Romanov
1313 Ave b Apt. 13
New York, NY
AND YOU? BACK FOR A LITTLE MORE *COUCH* OR *ROOF* ACTION?
ACTUALLY, I WAS THINKING ALONG THE LINES OF *COUNTERS* AND *THROW RUGS,* BUT YOU SEEM *BUSY.* HEY --
-- IS THIS THAT OLD PICTURE OF *ALEXI?*
YES. I --
-- DUG IT OUT FROM SOMEWHERE. I DON'T KNOW.
HEY, NEVER TRY TO *MUMBLE* AROUND A *BLIND MAN.*
YOU'VE GOT A RACING PULSE AND A PICTURE OF YOUR *DEAD HUSBAND* OUT AGAIN -- WHAT'S *UP,* NATASHA?
NOTHING. I'M *FINE.* JUST... *THINKING* ABOUT SOME THINGS.
AND YOU CAUGHT ME AT A BAD *TIME.* I HAVE TO LEAVE *TOWN* FOR A FEW DAYS.
AVENGERS BUSINESS?
ONLY IF I *FAIL.*

WELL, THAT'S HARDLY LIKELY. HEY, LISTEN, I JUST STOPPED BY TO --
COME ON. MOVE IT. I HAVE A PLANE TO CATCH.
CLCKT
I'LL GET YOU TO THE AIRPORT. OR AM I TOO MUCH OF A DAREDEVIL FOR YOU?
MATT! ENOUGH. I HAVE... NEIGHBORS.
9B
NATASHA -- DO YOU HEAR SOMETH --?
9C
LET'S GO. I DON'T WANT TO BE LATE.

JFK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.
SWISSAIR
WOMEN
WOMEN
RABIAN AIR
WOMEN
DEPARTURES
ARABIAN AIR

GOOD AFTERNOON. WELCOME ABOARD.
SWEET DREAMS...
WOMEN
OUT OF ORDER
TRAINEE
OUT OF ORDER
DO YOU KNOW IF WE GOT THE NEW *VISA* SLIPS ON BOARD YET?
TRAINEE
I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN *FIND OUT*...

RHAPASTAN.
<HEY! GIVE ME A HAND OVER HERE!>
<TROUBLE?>
TCHK

<HEY, HEY. SHE'S A FEISTY ONE!>
PADAZHDEETYE MEENOOTACHKOO!
<THAT'S RUSSIAN SHE'S SPEAKING, ISN'T IT?>
<YEAH, IT IS. I DON'T SPEAK IT, BUT I UNDERSTAND. SHE'S JUST ASKING US TO WAIT A MINUTE...>
<HEY!>
ENGH!
<LOOK OUT!>
OUFF!
TCHK
TCHK
OH!

KAK DYELA?
A! NEECHYEVO...
<WHAT ARE THEY SAYING?!>
<UH... THE ONE ON THE WALL ASKED THIS ONE HERE HOW THINGS ARE GOING, AND...>
I'M GLAD TO HEAR THAT. 'CAUSE YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE IN A BIT OF A BIND.
WELL, I WOULD BE FINE IF YOU HADN'T TAKEN MY CORNER!
MY APOLOGIES...
CHUK
TWUP

...I THOUGHT YOU'D BEEN *TRACKING* ME WELL ENOUGH TO AT LEAST GUESS.
NGH!
THUKK
YOU -- YOU *KNOW?*
THAT YOU'VE BEEN KEEPING *TABS* ON ME? YES.
BUT THERE'S MORE TO KNOW THAN *THAT,* ISN'T THERE? AND ON ALL OF *THOSE* ACCOUNTS, I AM STILL IN THE *DARK.*
AH, YOU MEAN LIKE THE QUESTION OF WHO I *AM?*
THAT'S *ONE* OF THEM.
MY NAME IS *YELENA BELOVA.* AND I AM A *STUDENT* FROM THE *RED ROOM* IN *MOSCOW.*
YOU *REMEMBER* IT, THEN? YES, I *THOUGHT* YOU WOULD.
AND *YES,* IT IS STILL *ACTIVE.*
YOU ARE ITS GREATEST *LEGEND, NATALIA ROMONOVA,* EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE NO LONGER TRULY *RUSSIAN.*

I AM AT WORK. YOU WILL CALL ME BLACK WIDOW.
YOU HAVE THAT WRONG, NATALIA. IT IS YOU WHO WILL CALL ME BLACK WIDOW.
THAT'S RIGHT. I AM THE FIRST STUDENT IN THE HISTORY OF THE RED ROOM TO SURPASS YOUR MARKS.
I MAY LACK YOUR EXPERIENCE, BUT I AM YOUR EQUAL OR YOUR BETTER IN EVERY OTHER RESPECT.
OR SO IT SAYS ON PAPER.
YOU HAVE TURNED YOUR BACK ON RUSSIA! YOU ARE AN AMERICAN NOW, A SUPER HERO!
I HAVE PARENTS BACK IN KIEV WAITING FOR ME TO MAKE THEM PROUD. I HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN WHAT THE BLACK WIDOW IS AT HER CORE --
-- A SPY!
LOOK, ROOSKAYA. YOU'VE PICKED A BAD DAY FOR ALL OF THIS.
MY PATIENCE IS ALREADY AT A LOW EBB.
AS IS MINE.

WASHINGTON.
WHAT DO YOU *MEAN* THE RUSSIANS ARE ON *TOP* OF IT?!
THIS AIN'T THE FRICKIN' *COLD WAR*, ANYMORE! WHAT *BUSINESS* DO *THEY* HAVE *INTERFERING?*
I DON'T THINK THEY CONSIDER IT *INTERFERING*, SIR. THEY HEARD ABOUT THE *BIO-TOXIN* JUST LIKE WE DID AND THOUGHT IT *PRUDENT* TO --
WHAT AM I *HEARING* HERE? YOUR PEOPLE SENT IN AN *AGENT?*
AS IS OUR *PREROGATIVE.* OUR *FIRST PRIORITY* WAS GETTING THOSE *BIO-TOXINS* AWAY FROM THAT *MADMAN* IN *RHAPASTAN.*
IF *WE* HADN'T PUT *BLACK WIDOW* IN MOTION, *YOUR* PEOPLE *WOULD* HAVE.
WHAT ARE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT? WE *DID* SEND OUT THE *WIDOW.*
US
ROMONOVA IS *RUSSIAN-TRAINED.* HER *LOYALTY* IS TO *US!*
MY *EYE,* IT IS! EVER HEARD OF THE *AVENGERS,* "COMRADE"?
IF ALL THEY *WANT* IS TO KEEP THE STUFF AWAY FROM THE *RHAPASTANS* --
-- WHY ARE THEY FIGHTING OVER WHICH COUNTRY THE AGENT IS GOING TO *GET* THE BIO-TOXINS *FOR?*
THEY'RE *NOT.* THEY'RE FIGHTING OVER WHICH COUNTRY SHE'S GOING TO BRING THEM *BACK* TO...
US
US
US
LT. COLONEL
M. MYERS

I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D KILL ME UNTIL YOU KNEW MORE ABOUT MY MISSION.
IF YOU'RE THE BLACK WIDOW, YOU'LL HAVE TO BE ABLE TO DELIVER.
WHAT'S TO KNOW? YOU WERE SENT FOR THE BIO-TOXINS IN THAT CRATE?
THIS BASE IS FILLED WITH SOLDIERS AND WEAPONS. YOU HAVE A PLAN TO ESCAPE IT ONCE I AM DISPOSED OF?
I WILL MANAGE.
AND THOUGH I MAY NOT KNOW WHICH COUNTRY YOU WOULD DELIVER THE SERUM TO --
FSHT-
19
-- I HAVE NO DOUBTS ABOUT WHERE THIS BLACK WIDOW'S ALLEGIANCE LIES.
I RESPECT AND ADMIRE YOU, ROMONOVA. BUT YOU ARE GETTING OLDER --
TALK
FFSSHT...
<VOICES ON THE OPEN CHANNEL!>
-- ARE YOU NOT?
-- ARE YOU NOT?

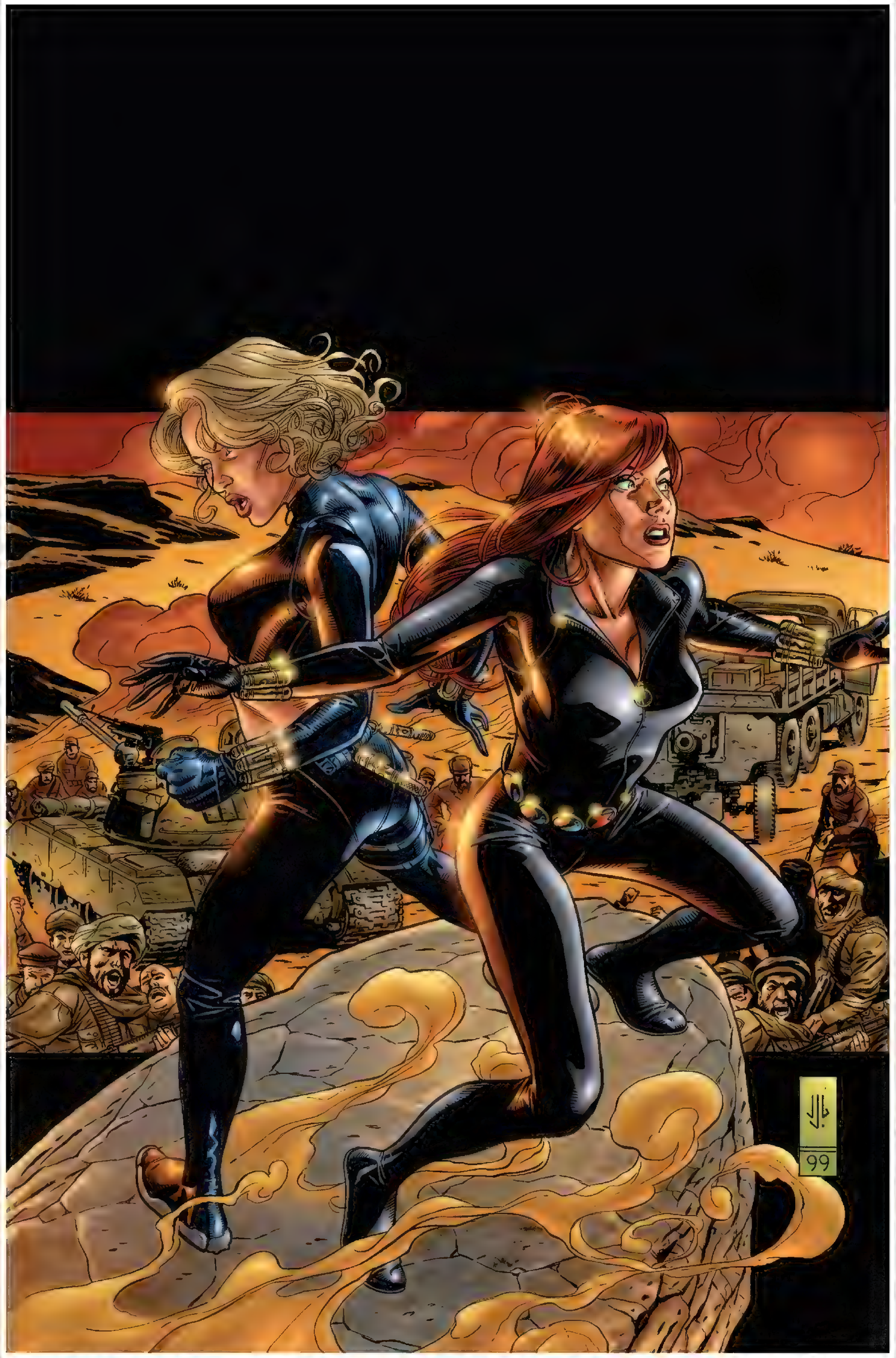
KRACK! KRACK!
WUD
UHN!
KRACK! KRACK! KRACK!
FWAP
PWFF

THAK
<GUN SHOTS!>
<THIS WAY!>
KRACK! KRACK! KRACK! KRACK!

VREEEEE
VUP VUP VUP
AUTO PILOT
ELECTRIC

<... AIM... AND -->
<--FIRE!>

WAM



THE ITSY-BITSY SPIDER **2**

RHAPASTAN.
TWENTY-THREE MILES FROM RHAPASTAN MILITARY OUTPOST FOUR.
BLAM

START
TUMP
CRIKK--
ARE YOU --

THE ITSY-BITSY SPIDER

INGENUE PART 2 OF 3

case report compiled by
DEVIN GRAYSON
visual documentation by
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infrared color analysis by
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copied to field agent supervisor,
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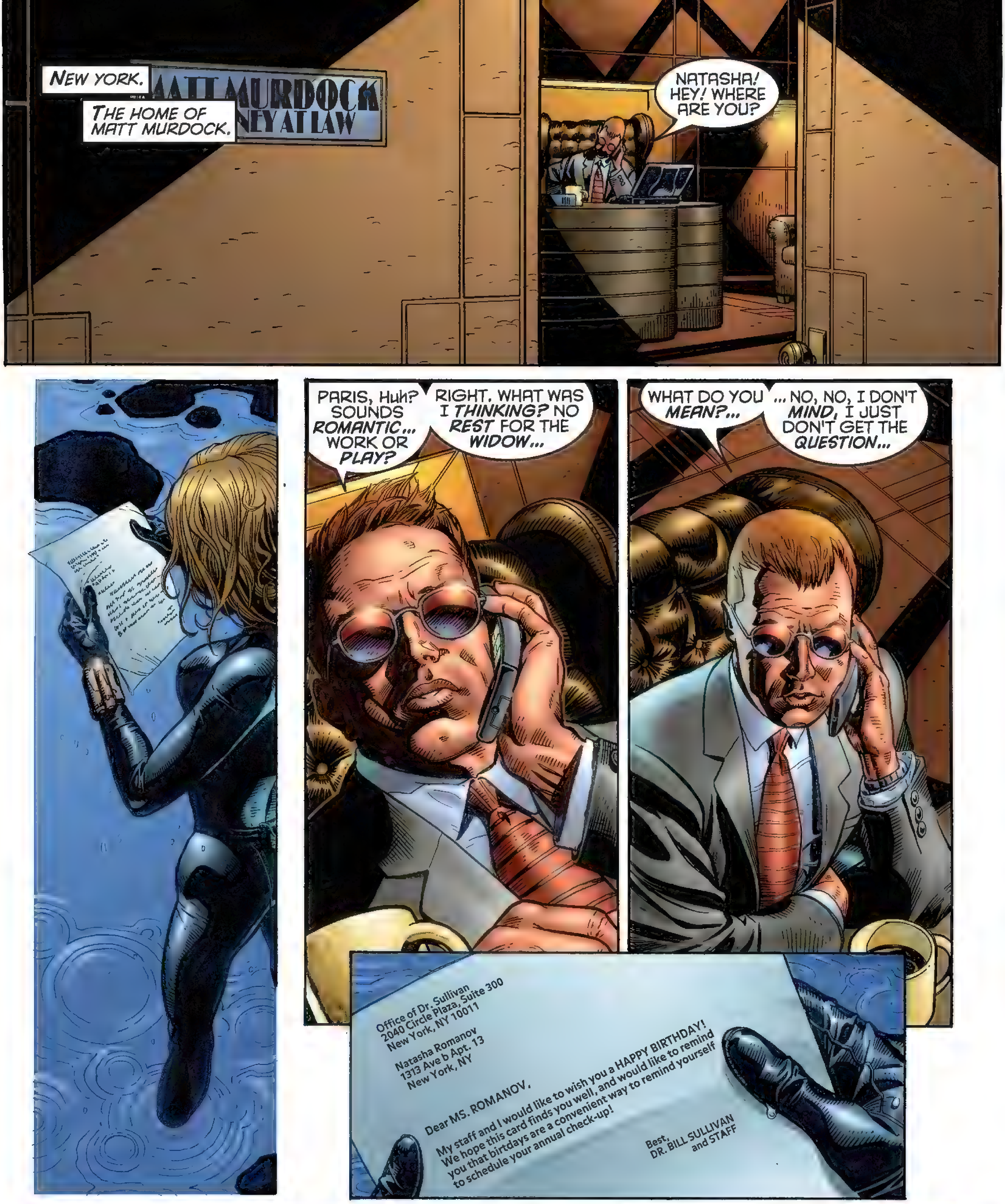
and bureau chief,
BOB HARRAS

Office of Dr. Sullivan
2040 Circle Plaza, Suite 300
New York, NY 10011
Natasha Romanov
1973 Ave b Apt. 12
New York, NY
Dear MS. ROMANOV,
My staff and I would like to wish you a HAPPY BIRT
We hope this card finds you well, and would lik
you that birdays are a convenient way to rem
to schedule your annual check-up!
Best,
DR. BILL SULLIVAN
and STAFF
VRUP-UP... VRUP-UP...
MERCURY
VROOOM
DON'T *FRET*, LITTLE ONE.
AT LEAST YOU'VE LEARNED NOT TO ENTER A *HOT ZONE* WITHOUT PREARRANGING A WAY OUT OF IT.


NEW YORK.
THE HOME OF MATT MURDOCK.
ATT MURDOCK NEY AT LAW
NATASHA! HEY! WHERE ARE YOU?
PARIS, Huh? SOUNDS *ROMANTIC*... WORK OR *PLAY?*
RIGHT. WHAT WAS I *THINKING?* NO *REST* FOR THE *WIDOW*...
WHAT DO YOU *MEAN?*...
...NO, NO, I DON'T *MIND*, I JUST DON'T GET THE *QUESTION*...

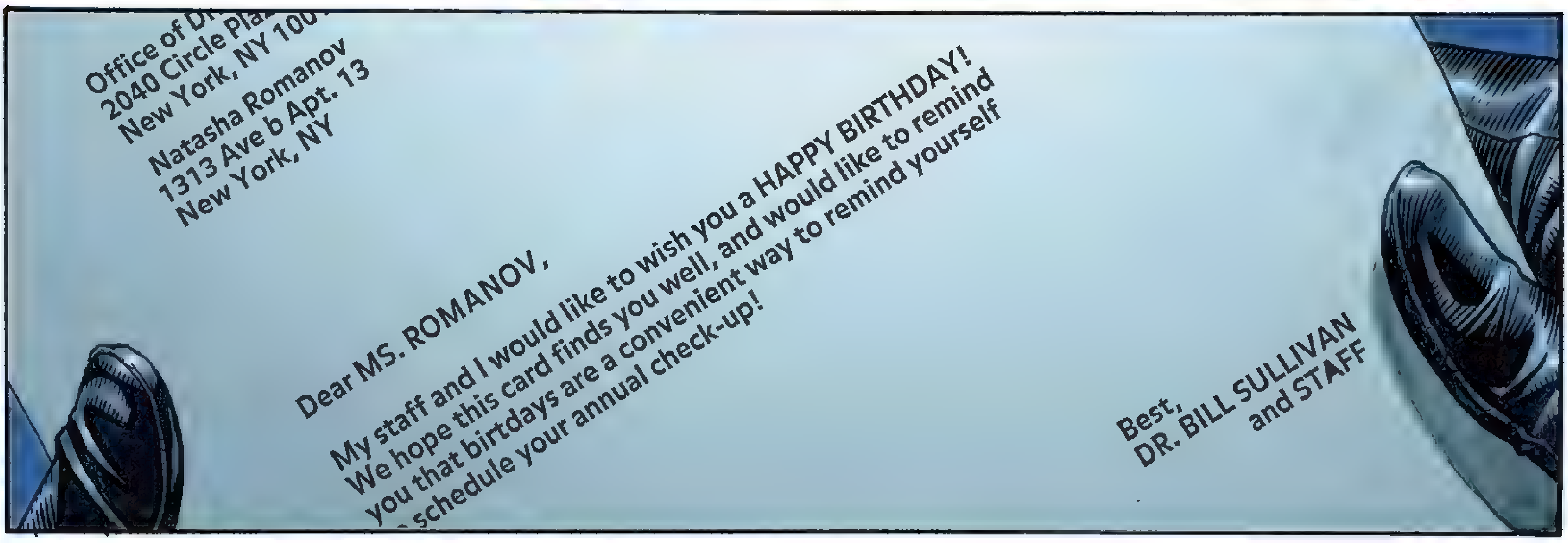
Office of Dr. Sullivan
2040 Circle Plaza, Suite 300
New York, NY 10011

Natasha Romanov
1313 Ave b Apt. 13
New York, NY

Dear MS. ROMANOV,

My staff and I would like to wish you a HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
We hope this card finds you well, and would like to remind
you that birtdays are a convenient way to remind yourself
to schedule your annual check-up!

Best,
DR. BILL SULLIVAN
and STAFF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We hope this card finds you well, and would like to remind
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Best,
DR. BILL SULLIVAN
and STAFF

I WAS JUST... WONDERING HOW YOU *THINK* OF ME, MATT.
AS THE DEFINITIVE *BABYSITTER*, OF COURSE! THAT IS, WHEN YOU'RE NOT THE DEFINITIVE *SEX GODDESS*.
LOOK, IF THIS IS ANOTHER ROUND OF THE HOW-DO-YOU-FIT-INTO-MY-*LIFE* CONVERSATION. I --
DON'T *FLATTER* YOURSELF.
WHAT I MEAN IS... WHAT DO YOU *KNOW* ABOUT ME? WHO DO YOU THINK *I AM?*
AM I... YOU KNOW... *UNIQUE?*
THIS SOUNDS LIKE A *TRICK QUESTION*, BUT, Hm, WELL... ...YOU'RE A FREELANCE *SPY*, SERIOUS ABOUT YOUR *WORK*... YOU'RE MORAL AND *TRUSTWORTHY*, YOU HAVEN'T REALLY ALLOWED YOURSELF TO BE TRULY *INTIMATE* SINCE ALEXI'S DEATH --
-- AT LEAST, NOT AS FAR AS *I* KNOW -- AND YOU HAVE AN ADORABLE LACK OF A SENSE OF HUMOR. *HELP* ANY?
YES, I *GUESS* SO. THANKS.
NATASHA -- WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?
I'VE GOT TO *GO*. DUTY *CALLS*.
HEY, *WAIT*. IF YOU *NEED* SOMETH --
CLK

Dr. DIDIER INES?
<gasp>
I'M CALLED THE BLACK WIDOW, AND I'VE BEEN SENT HERE BY TWO SEPARATE GOVERNMENTS TO KILL YOU...

WH-WHICH GOVERNMENTS?
DOES IT MATTER?
I AM... ONLY CURIOUS AS TO THE TRUE MOTIVES OF THE RHAPASTANIANS.
IS THIS IT? DOES IT HAVE A NAME?
YES. YES, THAT IS A SAMPLE. BUT NOT ENOUGH FOR A HUMAN.
I HAVE NOTED IT ONLY AS FORMULA DIX-SEPTIEME. BUT IN MY NIGHTMARES, ITS NAME IS "LA FRENESIE IMMORTEL," -- THE DEATHLESS FRENZY.
SHOW ME.

HOW CAN YOU CALL IT A *"DEATHLESS FRENZY"*?
I DO NOT MEAN THAT THE SERUM TAKES NO *CASUALTIES* --
"-- BUT RATHER THAT THE FRENZY *ITSELF* -- THE RAGE AGAINST *PERSONAL EXTINCTION* -- IS *IMMORTAL.*"

AND SO EVEN *THAT*, EVEN OUR PRIVATE FIGHT AGAINST TIME ITSELF --
-- DOES NOT BELONG TO US *ALONE.*
CLICK
IT'S A *GHASTLY* SERUM, ABHORRENT. I CAN'T *IMAGINE* WHAT WOULD COMPEL YOU TO *CREATE* SUCH A THING, LET ALONE TO *SELL* IT.
ONCE *BRIEFED* ON ITS *EXISTENCE* AND YOUR RELATED *ACTIONS*, NEITHER THE *RUSSIAN* NOR *AMERICAN* GOVERNMENTS *BLINKED*.
THEY WANT YOU AND YOUR CREATION *ANNIHILATED*.
I WAS SENT TO COLLECT *INFORMATION*, RETRIEVE TARGETED *OBJECTS*, AND PERFORM INDICATED *EXECUTIONS* WITHOUT PASSING *JUDGMENT*.
BUT TODAY I CHOSE *INDEPENDENT* ACTION.
AND DON'T THANK GOD *YET*, DR. INES...

"...WE ARE *NOT* GOING TO DO THIS THE *EASY* WAY."
PWTT
FUSE

WASHINGTON.
WHY ISN'T SHE RESPONDING?! WHERE IS SHE?
MOSCOW.
PACHYEMOO ON NYE ZNAYET?
WHAT DOES HE MEAN, WHY DON'T I KNOW? WHAT AM I NOW -- A MIND READER?
TELL STALYENKO THAT I'M ASSUMING DOUBLE CROSS, AND THAT IF THE WIDOW DOESN'T REPORT IN TO US WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS --
-- I'M SENDING OUT COUNTER-AGENTS TO HAVE HER ERASED!
<HE'S INFERRING DOUBLE-CROSS. WARNS YOU THAT HE INTENDS TO HAVE A COUNTER-AGENT ELIMINATE THE WIDOW.>*
SHTO VI! <WHY WOULD ROMANOVA BE WORKING FOR ME?>
<TELL HIM HE NEEDN'T BOTHER.>
<TELL HIM I HAVE A "COUNTER-AGENT" IN THE FIELD ALREADY, AND THAT THE NEW BLACK WIDOW WILL REPORT IN TO ME SHORTLY...>
*TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN -- ED

ZURICH.
ALL RIGHT. YOU CAN TAKE THE BLINDFOLD OFF NOW.
WHERE ARE WE?
SOMEWHERE THEY WON'T THINK TO *LOOK* FOR YOU.
INTERNATIONAL *ESPIONAGE* IS A *PARANOID* AND *SHORTSIGHTED* VENTURE.
THOSE WHO PLAY HIDE BEHIND THE RHETORIC OF *DEFENSE* AND *PRESERVATION* --
-- BUT THEY DO *NOT* BELIEVE IN THE *FUTURE.*
KILL *YOURSELF* IF YOU THINK IT WILL *SOLVE* ANYTHING.
IF, HOWEVER, YOU WISH TO *LIVE,* YOU WILL NEED MY *PROTECTION.*
AND IF YOU WANT MY *PROTECTION,* YOU WILL SPEND EVERY WAKING MOMENT PRODUCING AN *ANTIDOTE* TO THAT *SERUM.*
YES, MADAME.

RHAPASTAN MILITARY OUTPOST FOUR.
<CAPTAIN AFZAL! WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS REPORT!?>*
<GENERAL! WE WERE NOT EXPECTING YOU!>
<AND I WAS NOT EXPECTING TO LOSE A SAMPLE OF THE SERUM TO THE BLACK WIDOW!>
<OH, NO, SIR. THAT WAS TAKEN CARE OF. WE SHOT DOWN THE HELICOPTER BEFORE SHE COULD ESCAPE.>
<IT IS COVERED IN MY REPORT.>
<AH, BUT THERE ARE MANY THINGS NOT COVERED IN YOUR "REPORT," CAPTAIN.>
<FOR EXAMPLE, WHY WERE NO BODILY REMAINS FOUND AFTER YOUR MEN SEARCHED THE COPTER WRECKAGE?>
<AND MOST IMPORTANTLY -- WHY WERE NONE OF YOUR MEN AFFECTED BY THE SERUM WHEN IT SUPPOSEDLY EXPLODED IN THE AIR ABOVE THEIR HEADS!?>
<I... I'M NOT SURE, I -->
<BECAUSE THERE WAS NOTHING AND NO ONE IN THE HELICOPTER, YOU IDIOT!>
<YOU'RE TO RENDEZVOUS WITH COLONEL KHAN TO FINISH THE TRANSPORT. WE MUST MOVE FASTER NOW! ALL OF OUR PLANS ARE IN JEOPARDY.>
<EXPECT INTERFERENCE, CAPTAIN. EXPECT THE WIDOW!>
*TRANSLATED FROM THE ARABIC -- ED

MOSCOW.
DA?
<SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, MR. STALYENKO. BUT YOUR... AGENT IS ON LINE FOUR. SAYS IT'S URGENT.>
SPASÉEBA.
<YELENA? WHERE ARE YOU?>
<SO, IT'S TRUE. YOU REALLY ARE RUNNING THINGS NOW, YOU FAT LEECH.>
<QUITE A RISE, STALYENKO, NO? LAST TIME I SAW YOU, YOU WERE A MAFIA LAP DOG.>
<ROMANOVA! SO LOVELY OF YOU TO CALL.>
<WE WERE ALL AFRAID YOU'D FORGOTTEN US OVER THE YEARS.>
<WAS THIS YOUR IDEA, YURI? THIS LITTLE INGENUE YOU HAVE ON MY TAIL?>
<SHE'S GOING TO GET HURT. YOU HAVE TO KNOW THAT.>

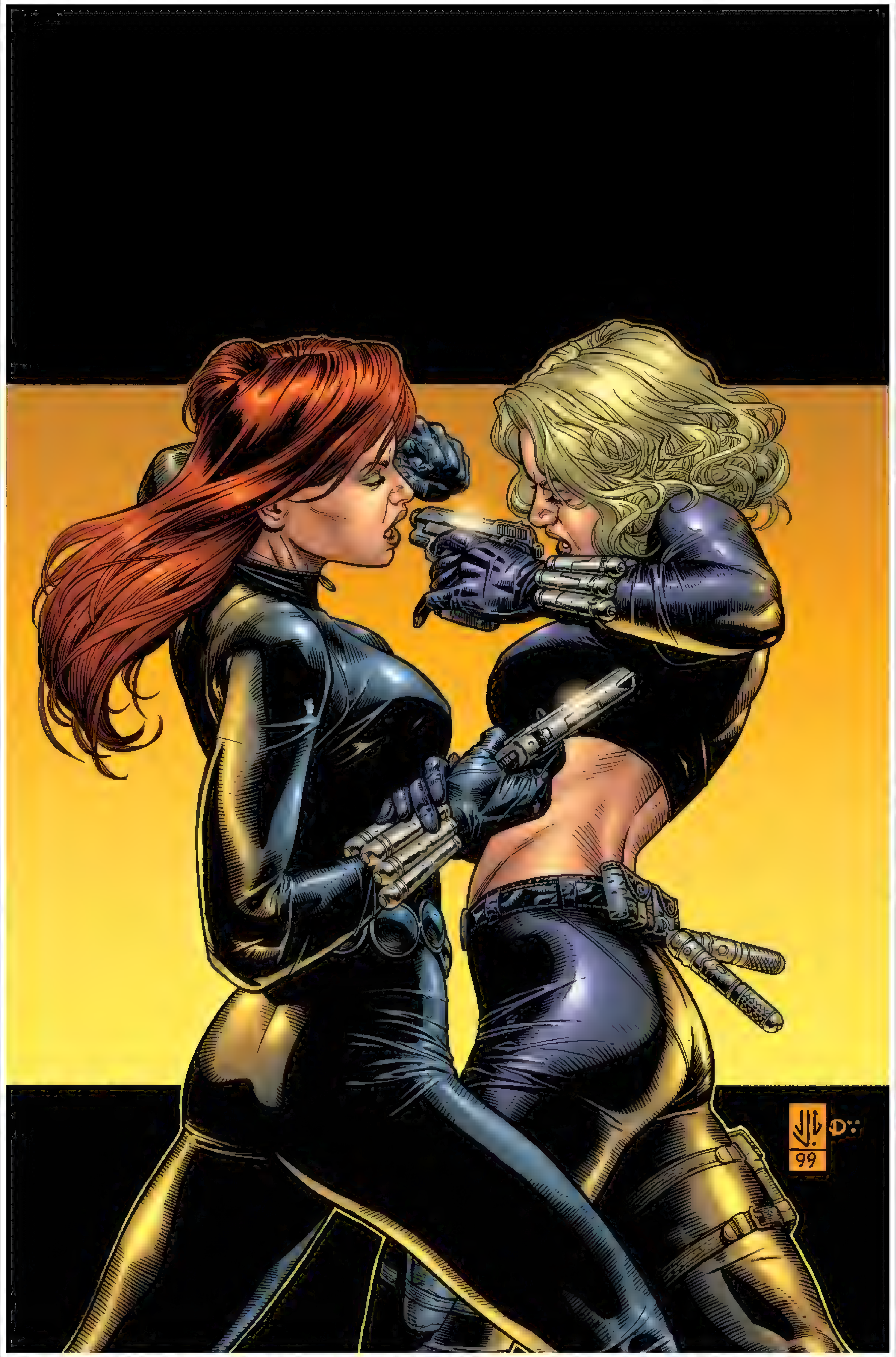
<ACTUALLY, IT WAS HER IDEA, NATALIA. KIDS CAN BE SO AMBITIOUS, CAN'T THEY?>
<YELENA IS HUNGRY, PASSIONATE. SHE WILL FIND AND DESTROY YOU NO MATTER WHAT THE COST.>
<PERHAPS YOU REMEMBER THAT FEELING FROM YOUR PAST -->
<"-- THOUGH COME TO THINK OF IT, PERHAPS YOU DO NOT. YOU NEVER CHOSE THE LIFE OF A SPY, DID YOU, NATALIA?>
<"IF I RECALL CORRECTLY, IT CHOSE YOU. A HUSBAND, THE GOVERNMENT -- VARIOUS MASTERS PULLING AT YOUR LOYAL NATURE.>
<"IT MUST BE DISCOURAGING --TO FIGHT ONE SO DETERMINED, FOR SOMETHING YOU YOURSELF JUST HAPPENED TO FALL INTO.>
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
KSSSSH
KSSSSSH
<"I WONDER, NATALIA. DO YOU EVER THINK ABOUT JUST LETTING GO?">
MISS ME?
SWAP

GASP
UHN!

LISTEN, *ROOSKAYA.* I DON'T WANT TO *HURT* YOU...
...AND YOU DO *NOT* WANT TO "*BE*" *ME*.
DO YOU REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A *SPY*, LITTLE ONE?
I WAS A *DANCER*, DID YOU KNOW THAT? THE *BALLET*...
...I SPENT MY ENTIRE *CHILDHOOD* STRAINING TO SEE THE WORLD ON *TIPTOE*; ACHING TO BE GOOD ENOUGH, GRACEFUL ENOUGH, STRONG ENOUGH TO *DANCE*.
AND I *DID*, YELENA BELOVA, I *DID* DANCE. ON POINT, IN PINK SATIN SHOES, MY ARMS STRETCHING OPEN TO THE WORLD...
...THEN *ALEXI* GOT *TANGLED* IN IT -- MY DEAR HUSBAND -- IN THE *WEB*.
NEXT, MY CAREER, MY *COUNTRY*...
...YOU LEARN TO BE *LOST* ALL THE *TIME*, SO AS TO NEVER BE ABLE TO *DIRECT* ANYONE TO YOUR *EMPLOYERS*. OR YOUR *HEART*. OR YOUR *VULNERABILITIES*.
AND FOR WHAT, *ROOSKAYA*, FOR WHAT?
TO PLAY *PAWN* TO ANY ONE OF A DOZEN GOVERNMENTS THAT WILL SHOOT YOU IN THE *BACK* JUST FOR BECOMING THE *DISPASSIONATE* CREATURE THEY *REQUIRE*?

YOU PUSH ON AND ON, NEVER KNOWING WHAT WILL NEXT MAKE YOU SUDDENLY AWARE OF THE *COLD.*
SOMETHING AS *DEVASTATING* AS THE DEATH OF A *FRIEND?* OR SOMETHING AS *SUBTLE* AS A *BIRTHDAY* IGNORED?
WHY BE THE *WIDOW, ROOSKAYA,* WHEN YOU CAN BE *YELENA?*
CRAK

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ROMANOVA...



THE ITSY-BITSY SPIDER 3

THE ITSY-BITSY SPIDER

[redacted] I.D. [redacted] PART 3 OF 3

case report compiled by
DEVIN GRAYSON
visual documentation by
J.G. JONES
infrared color analysis by
IAN HANNIN & ANDY TROY
top secret coding provided by
RICHARD STARKINGS & COMICRAFT/WA
submitted for recommendation of action to:
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copied to field agent supervisor,
NANCI DAKESIAN
and bureau chief,
BOB HARRAS

-SKTCH- THIS IS DAREDEVIL TO BLACK WIDOW. -SKTCH- REPEAT. DEVIL TO WIDOW, DO YOU COPY?
-SKTCH- LOOK, I PROMISE THIS CALL IS ALL BUSINESS, BABY. -SKTCH- YOU OUT THERE, WIDOW? -SKTCH-
LORD TAYLOR
-SKTCH- I'VE GOT NEWS ON YOUR PACKAGE. -SKTCH- THIS IS DAREDEVIL TO BLACK WIDOW, COME IN. -SKTCH-
THIS IS THE BLACK WIDOW.
PROCEED WITH YOUR MESSAGE, DAREDEVIL.

WHO THE -- WHO ARE YOU?
YOUR OPERATIVE IS DOWN, DAREDEVIL.
THIS IS BLACK WIDOW.
-SKTCH- DAREDEVIL? -SKTCH-
I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, OR IF WHAT YOU'RE TELLING ME IS TRUE, THOUGH BELIEVE ME, I INTEND TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF BOTH ISSUES.
IN THE MEANTIME, THE AVENGERS CONTACTED ME WITH SOME INFORMATION TO PASS ON TO THE WIDOW. THEY HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO REACH HER.
IT'S ABOUT THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST. YOU BRIEFED?
AFFIRMATIVE. RHAPASTAN. THE BIO-TOXIN. I'M UP TO SPEED.
-SKTCH- THE GOOD GUYS WERE COUNTING ON THE WIDOW TO PROTECT THOSE SOLDIERS. -SKTCH-
-SKTCH- THE U.S. AND RUSSIAN TROOPS HAVE BEEN DEPLOYED TO INTERVENE.
-SKTCH- YEAH, WELL, IF YOU ARE ON THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS, I SURE HOPE YOU HAVE AN IDEA ABOUT HOW TO CONTAIN THAT STUFF BEFORE THE RHAPASTAN MILITARY DECIDES TO USE IT. -SKTCH-
UNDERSTOOD.

RHAPASTAN.
ENTRY *TWO*, DAY *SIX*. BIO-TOXIN TRANSPORT LOCATED.
I WAIT FOR *NIGHTFALL* TO MAKE CONTACT.
WE *ALL* WAIT FOR *NIGHTFALL*...

ZURICH.
BRNG-BRIING
ALLÔ?
DOCTOR INES, LISTEN CAREFULLY --
EIGHT DAYS AGO, THE BLACK WIDOW LEFT YOU IN YOUR SAFE HOUSE WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO CREATE AN ANTIDOTE TO YOUR BIO-TOXIN.
HAVE YOU?
NON. I --
-- I HAVE FOUND NO ANTIDOTE, BUT I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CREATE A VACCINE --
THEN, THAT WILL HAVE TO DO.
I NEED THAT VACCINE SHIPPED TO RHAPASTAN. WRITE THIS DOWN --
Mm Hm... OUI... "ATTENTION COLONEL KHAN... " ALL RIGHT, AND THEN --? LEAVE THE COUNTRY? BUT WHERE WILL I --?
... YES. YES, I UNDERSTAND.

RHAPASTAN.
KA-BOOOM
<FIRE!>
<...UNDER ATTACK!>
<AAAUGH!>

<HEY --!>
KSSSSH
SKT-SKTK--
VROOM...
<HELLPP MEEE!>

SORRY, PAL. NO HITCH-HIKERS.
VRRMMMM
SKEEER
CA-CHAK
BRAAAAKK
POK
POK

SKREEEEEEE

THE *BLACK WIDOW HERSELF.*
I AM *HONORED.*
AS SHOULD *YOU* BE, TO BE CAPTURED BY COLONEL *KHAN* HIMSELF.
AND NOW YOU ARE LOOKING AT ME AND *WONDERING,* WHAT SORT OF MAN *IS* HE, THE ONE WHO HAS BROUGHT ME *DOWN?*
LET'S *SEE.* WE KNOW WHO *YOU* ARE. YOUR SKILL AND *TENACITY* DEFINE AND *DISTINGUISH* YOU.
I DO *WONDER,* THOUGH, ABOUT YOUR *MOTIVATION.* WHAT *COMPELLED* YOU TO *FIGHT* SO FIERCELY FOR THIS *BIO-TOXIN?*
WAS IT *FEAR* FOR YOUR *INCOMING* AMERICAN *SOLDIERS?* OR MAYBE THE *RUSSIAN* ONES?
YOU NEEDN'T HAVE *WORRIED* OVER THEIR *CONTAMINATION,* WIDOW. I NEVER INTENDED TO USE THE BIO-TOXIN ON MY *ENEMIES.*
WHY GIFT *THEM* WITH TWO FULL MINUTES OF *SUPER STRENGTH* WHEN I HAVE AN ARMY OF MY *OWN?*
YOU'RE A *FOOL!* YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! EXPOSURE TO THE SERUM WILL *KILL* THEM! THE STRENGTH ONLY LASTS AS LONG AS --
I UNDERSTAND *PERFECTLY.* THE MEN ARE *EXPENDABLE* IN THE FACE OF THE *REPUTATION* THEY CAN GENERATE. WHO WOULD *CHALLENGE SUCH* AN ARMY AS THAT *SERUM* CAN *PRODUCE?*
NOW YOU *SEE,* DON'T YOU? NOW YOU *KNOW* WHAT KIND OF *MAN* HE IS, THE ONE WHO BROUGHT YOU *DOWN...*

<...I THOUGHT SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A RED-HEAD, TOO. I LIKE THE REDHEADS. BUT I SUPPOSE IT'S NOT HARD FOR A SPY TO CHANGE HER HAIR COLOR.>
<YEAH, I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT. ANYWAY, COME ON, THE EMERGENCY SUPPLIES ARE HERE.>
<THE GUYS IN THE INFIRMARY HAVE BEEN SCREAMING FOR MORE BURN CREAM FOR HOURS.>
<DELIVERY FOR COLONEL KHAN. I NEED A SIGNATURE.>
<WE'VE GOT A BUNCH OF REPLACEMENT TENTS FOR YOU GUYS, ADDITIONAL GENERAL EQUIP, SUPPLEMENTARY MED SUPPLIES, AND A NURSE WHO SPECIALIZES IN BURNS.>
<A WOMAN ON A MILITARY CONVOY?>
<HEARD YOU ALREADY HAD A WOMAN HERE.>
<OH, OUR PRISONER? SHE'S NO WOMAN, SHE'S A SPY!>
<SHE'S A SPIDER!>
HA HA HAHAHA HA HA HA

<COLONEL KHAN? THE SUPPLIES ARE HERE.>
<THANK YOU, CAPTAIN AFZAL. PLEASE ORGANIZE A TEAM TO CLEAR AWAY SPACE TO PITCH THE NEW TENTS.>
<YES, SIR. EXCUSE ME, SIR, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE.
<HQ SENT A NURSE IN, A BURN SPECIALIST, A... FEMALE.>
<YES? SO?>
<SO -- SIR -- SHE HAS ASKED TO SEE EVERY MAN HERE IN ORDER TO INOCULATE THEM FROM BURN-RELATED INFECTIONS -->
<THEN MAKE SURE EVERYONE REPORTS TO HER.
<WHY ARE YOU STILL HERE?>
<BUT, SIR -- A STRANGE WOMAN HERE, NOW? AREN'T YOU WORRIED FOR THE SAFETY OF THE BIO-TOXIN?>
<AH, YOU FEAR A SPY. WORRY NOT, CAPTAIN -->
<-- NO SPY WOULD DARE ATTEMPT A MISSION THAT THE BLACK WIDOW HERSELF HAD FAILED.>

I DON'T *THINK* SO, RŌOSKAYA.
TI!?
I *KNOW*. YOU THOUGHT YOU SAW ME *KILLED*.
ASK YOURSELF *THIS,* LITTLE ONE. IF IT WERE THAT EASY TO *DO* --
-- WOULD IT REALLY BE WORTH *DOING?*
NYET. YOU DO NOT GET OFF *THAT* EASY, ROMONOVA.
I SAW YOU *SHOT DOWN* --
-- BY A FEW *FRIENDS* OF *MINE* IN BORROWED *S.H.I.E.L.D.* UNIFORMS USING RUBBER *BULLETS* -- ALL FOR *YOUR BENEFIT*.
YOU WERE GETTING TOO *CLOSE*. I CAN'T WORK WITH A *SHADOW*.
BUT I KNEW THAT YOUR *AMBITION* WOULD ALLOW YOU TO BELIEVE THAT YOU HAD *SURVIVED* ME, AND THAT YOU WERE MEANT TO CONTINUE ON IN MY *PLACE*.
I THANK YOU FOR THE *ALIBI*, AND *WARN* YOU: DO NOT BRING YOUR PASSION TO *WORK*, YELENA. IT IS ONLY A *DETRIMENT*.
AND NOW YOU THINK YOU CAN JUST TAKE THE *BIO-TOXIN* AND *GO?!*
THE -- BIO-TOXIN -- STAYS -- WHERE IT *IS*.
CRAZY! YOU ARE *CRAZY!*
LET US *HOPE* NOT.
FOR I *CAME* HERE TO ENSURE *SANITY*.

RUMMMBLE
<OUR FOES APPROACH! RELEASE THE BIO-TOXIN!>
WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHU
<WHAT?>
<HE MEANS TO USE IT ON THE ENEMY... DOESN'T HE?>
<EXPOSURE WILL DESTROY US!>
WHUP
WHUP WHUP
<GLORY TO OUR ARMY!>
WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP
WHUP
<GLORY TO RHAPASTAN!>
NATALIA! THE BIO-TOXIN WILL KILL YOU IF --

WAKOOOM
<COUGH, COUGH>
<GET READY FOR THE RAGE TO SET IN!>
<ALLAH BE MERCIFUL!>
THE TOXIN! WE'VE BEEN INFECTED! DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT IT DOES?! WE'LL --
Shhh...
FEAR NOT, LITTLE ONE --
-- THE INOCULATION SHOTS I GAVE YOU AND THE SOLDIERS WERE HARDLY FOR BURN-RELATED INFECTIONS...
...I WAS ABLE TO VACCINATE EVERYONE... EXCEPT --
NNAAAAGH!

N-NOT *ME!* IT WAS NOT SUPPOSED TO INFECT *ME!*
<BACK *AWAY!* KEEP *AWAY* FROM HIM, BOYS!>
DIIIIIIE!
I'M GETTING TOO *OLD* FOR THIS.
BUT THOSE ARE *RUSSIANS* HE'S GOING AFTER!
WHEN WILL YOU *LEARN,* YELENA? RUSSIANS, *AMERICANS* --

"-- THOSE ARE *PEOPLE* HE'S GOING AFTER!"
KRACK KRACK
BRAAAAAKK
POK POK
FORGET ABOUT *THEM*, KHAN --
-- I BELIEVE THIS DANCE IS *MINE*.
I DON'T *UNDERSTAND*. SHE SAID SHE WAS TOO *OLD* FOR THIS, AND THEN SHE WENT TO DEFEND *OUR* SIDE.
IF SHE IS *OLD* AND *TIRED*, THEN WHY IS SHE *FIGHTING*? ESPECIALLY FOR THE *RUSSIANS*?
SHE MEANS THAT SHE IS TIRED OF THE SHORT-SIGHTED *STUPIDITY* OF MEN LIKE *ME* AND *COLONEL KHAN*, NOT OF *FIGHTING* TO *STOP* US.
SHE WILL *NEVER* BE TOO TIRED TO BATTLE AGAINST *MY* AMBITIONS.
NOR *YOURS*, BELOVA. NOR *YOURS*...
ZAK

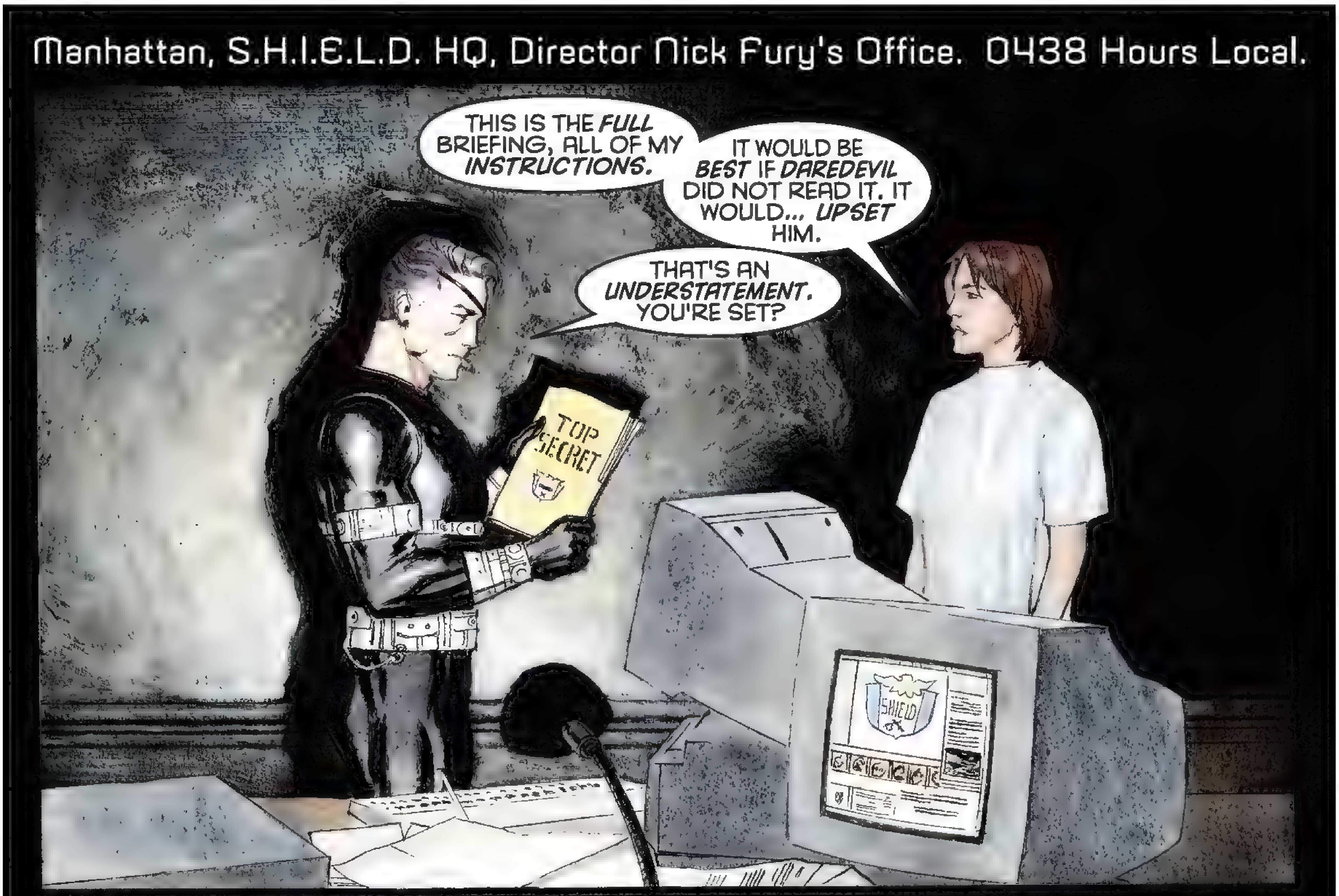
KRAK
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
NO, LITTLE ONE. YOU WILL NOT KILL ME *TODAY*.
AND WHY *NOT?*
BECAUSE YOU LOOK *FORWARD* TO COMING *AFTER* ME AGAIN. THE *GAME* IS YOUR *PASSION*.
AND *THAT* IS WHAT MAKES *YOU* UNIQUE.

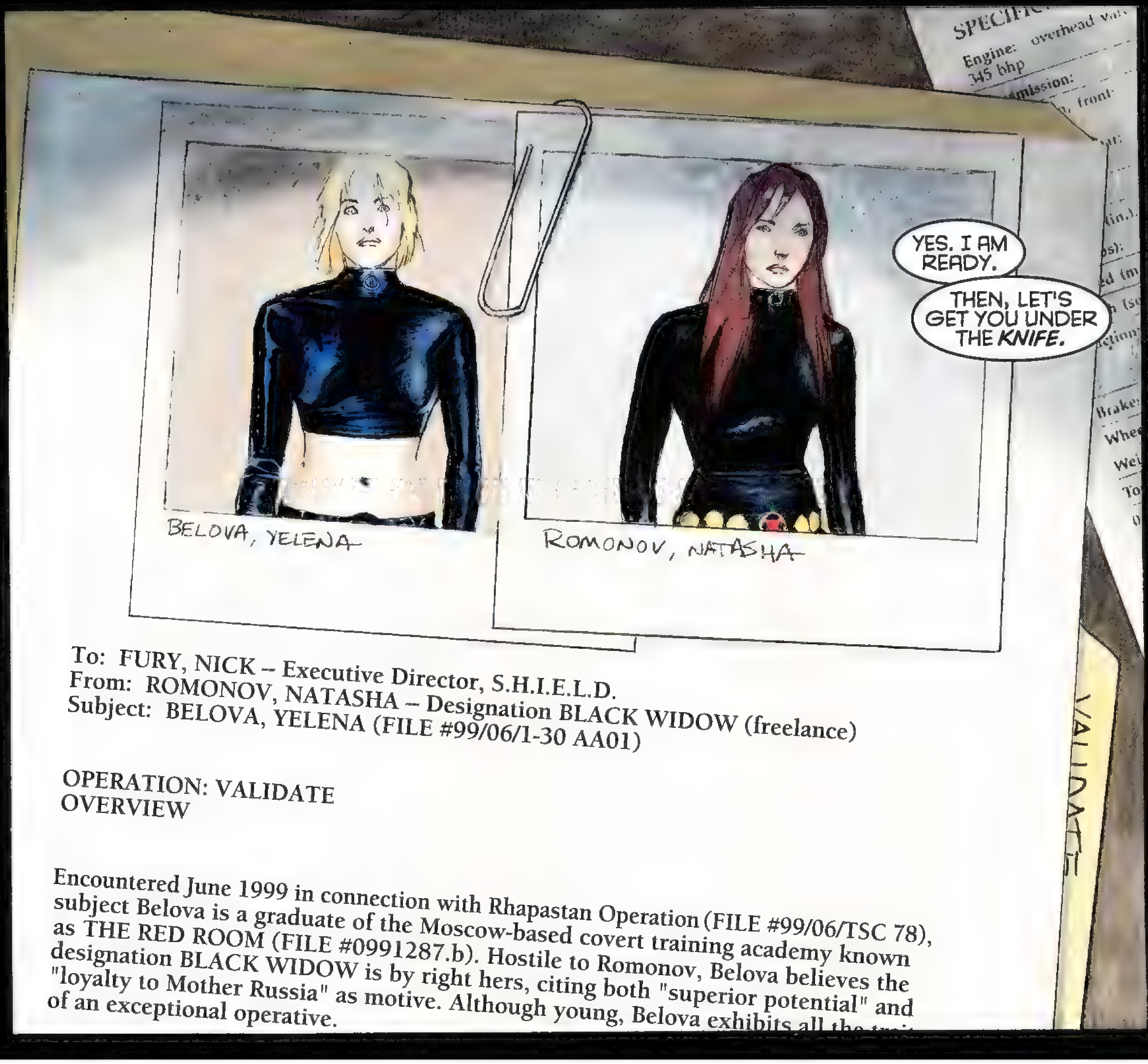
BESIDES --
-- HADN'T YOU BETTER BE FINDING A WAY *OUT* OF THIS *HOT ZONE?*
YOU HAVE THE RHAPASTANS UNDER *CONTROL?*
YES, BLACK WIDOW, *THANK YOU.* BUT WHAT ABOUT THE *BIO-TOXIN.* IS THERE --

KRUMPH
-- NO. THERE NO BIO-TOXIN *LEFT*. KHAN *WASTED* IT ALL TRYING TO INFECT HIS OWN *TROOPS* --
-- JUST AS I'M *SURE* YOU OR *STALYENKO* WOULD HAVE WASTED IT ON *YOURS*.
WELL, THE RUSSIANS ARE *CRAZY!* LOOK AT THEM *NOW* -- WHY ON *EARTH* ARE THEY BLOWING ONE OF THEIR *OWN* HELICOPTERS OUT OF THE SKY?
THEY SUSPECT A *SPY* IS USING IT TO *ESCAPE*.
AND SO THEY ARE TRYING TO STOP THE *UNSTOPPABLE*.
OH, THE *IMPOSTOR* BLACK WIDOW? YOU MEAN THEY'VE SHOT HER *DOWN?*
SIR! SIR! ONE OF OUR *JEEPS* IS *MISSING!*
NOT *LIKELY*...
... A SPY IS VERY DIFFICULT TO *STOP* --
-- ONCE SHE HAS FOUND WHAT MAKES HER *UNIQUE*...
DASVEEDÁNEEYA!

BREAKDOWN 1

Over the Atlantic, Operations Room, S.H.I.E.L.D. Carrier #04
1907 Hours Zulu
MOSCOW CAM 1
PACKAGE ON ITS WAY TO YOU.
CONFIRMED.
MOSCOW CAM 1
STAND BY, STAND BY...
MOSCOW CAM 3
MOSCOW CAM 2
‹YELENA, IT'S YOUR MOTHER. AUNTIE OLGA IS EXPECTING YOU TONIGHT...›
GO, GO, GO!
MOSCOW CAM 3
POSHOL TY!
‹... SAYS TO WEAR SOMETHING NICE, THAT DIMITRI WILL BE THERE AND HE'S SINGLE...›
MOSCOW CAM 3
... SUKIN... SYN...
TRANSPORT, GO. EXFIL, STAND-BY. CONTOL? WE'RE DONE HERE.
LET'S BRING THE PACKAGE HOME...


Manhattan, S.H.I.E.L.D. HQ, Director Nick Fury's Office. 0438 Hours Local.
THIS IS THE *FULL* BRIEFING, ALL OF MY *INSTRUCTIONS.*
IT WOULD BE *BEST* IF *DAREDEVIL* DID NOT READ IT. IT WOULD... *UPSET* HIM.
THAT'S AN *UNDERSTATEMENT.* YOU'RE SET?
TOP SECRET
SHIELD

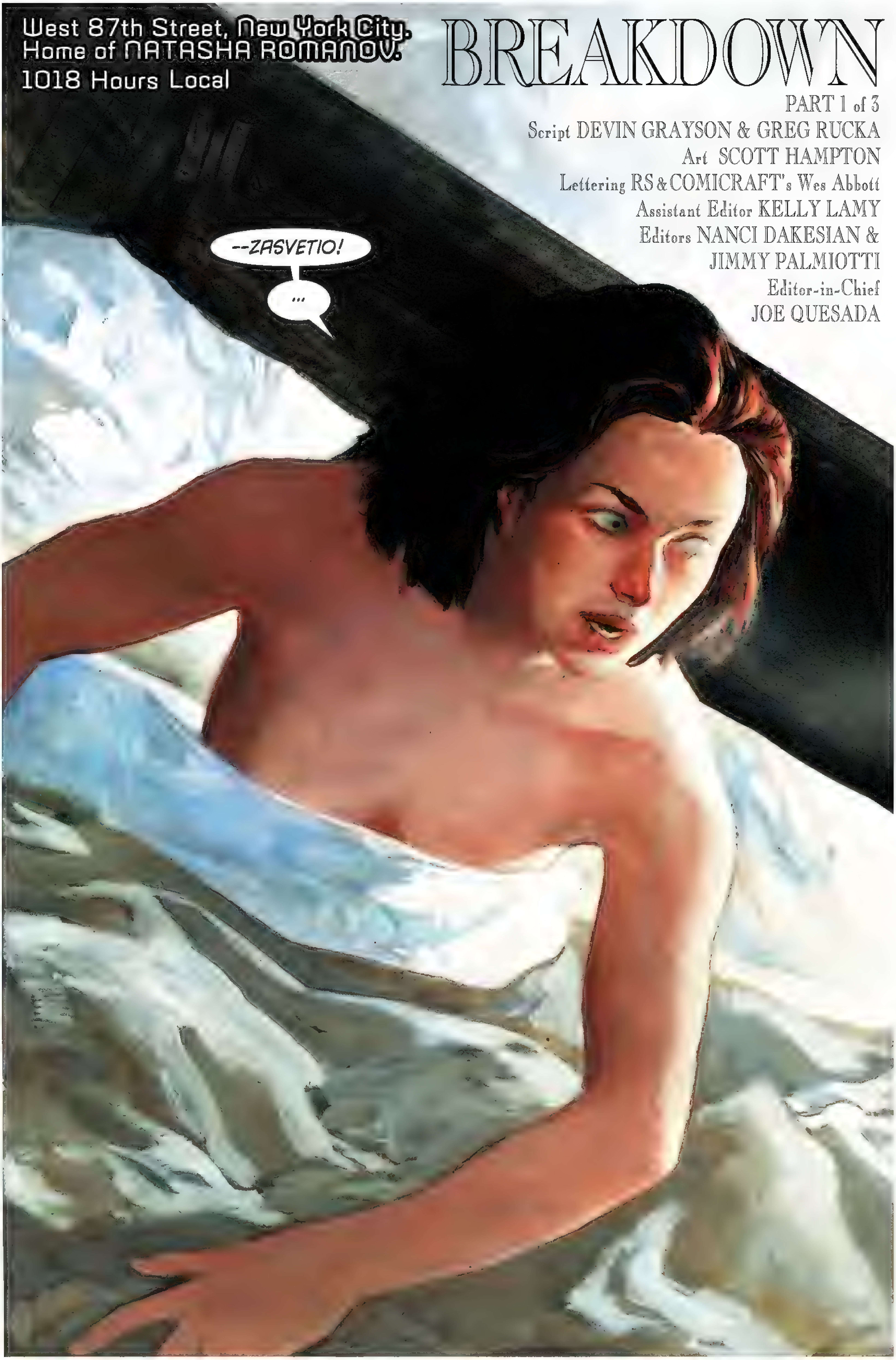

BELOVA, YELENA
ROMONOV, NATASHA
YES. I AM READY.
THEN, LET'S GET YOU UNDER THE *KNIFE.*
VALIDATE

To: FURY, NICK – Executive Director, S.H.I.E.L.D.
From: ROMONOV, NATASHA – Designation BLACK WIDOW (freelance)
Subject: BELOVA, YELENA (FILE #99/06/1-30 AA01)

OPERATION: VALIDATE
OVERVIEW

Encountered June 1999 in connection with Rhapastan Operation (FILE #99/06/TSC 78), subject Belova is a graduate of the Moscow-based covert training academy known as THE RED ROOM (FILE #0991287.b). Hostile to Romonov, Belova believes the designation BLACK WIDOW is by right hers, citing both "superior potential" and "loyalty to Mother Russia" as motive. Although young, Belova exhibits all the

0620 Hours Local
YOU COULD STILL STOP THIS, FURY.
YEAH, I SUPPOSE I COULD.
GENTLEMEN! WE'RE STARTING!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY SHE'S DOING THIS.
YOU DON'T NEED TO.
SHE'S A PROFESSIONAL, DAREDEVIL.
REMEMBER THAT.
STILL. THIS IS JUST... JUST CREEPY.
OH, YEAH.
DIRECTOR FURY, WE'RE READY FOR TRANSPORT.
GOOD.
BEGIN PHASE TWO.



BREAKDOWN

PART 1 of 3

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Lettering RS & COMICRAFT's Wes Abbott
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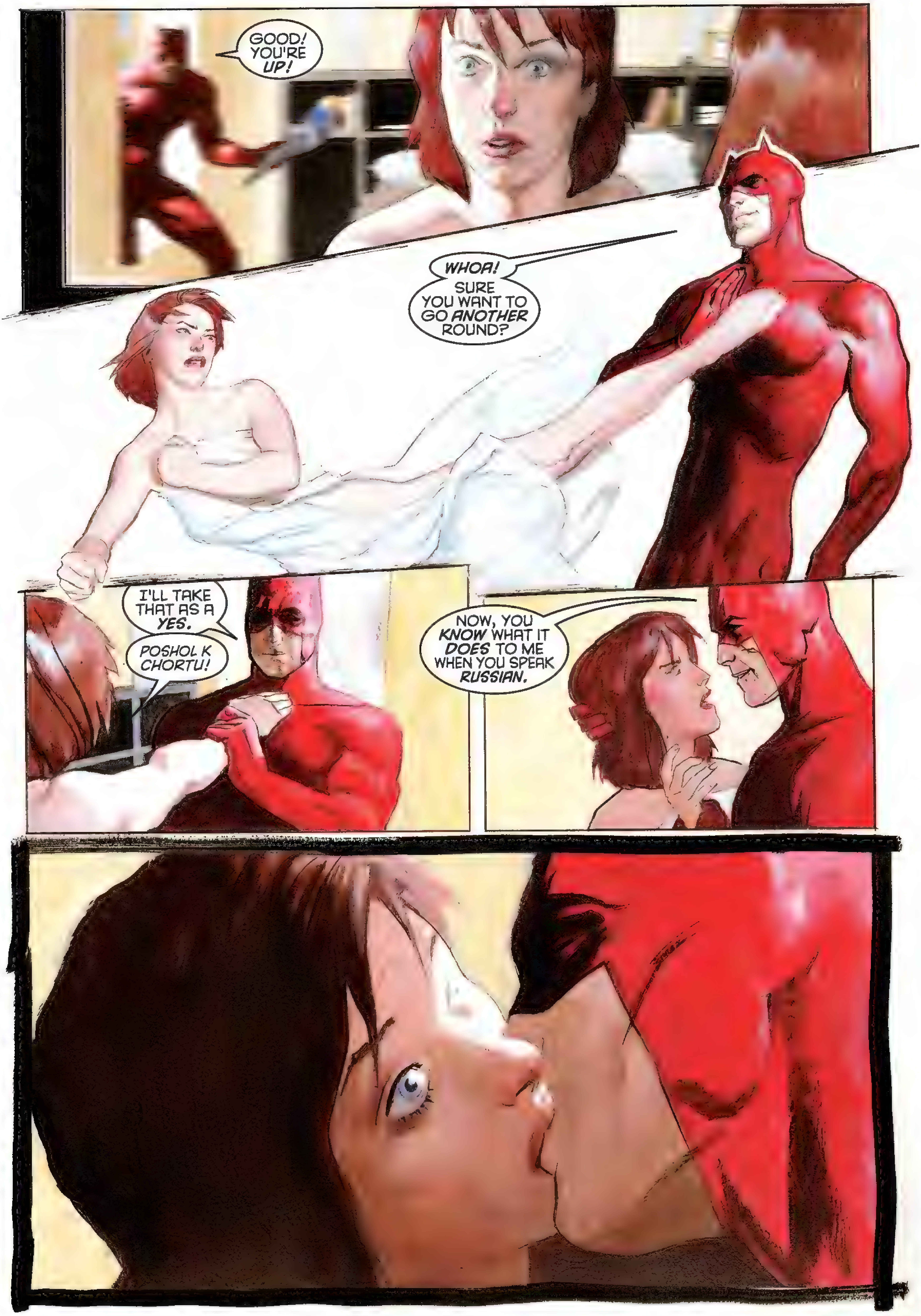
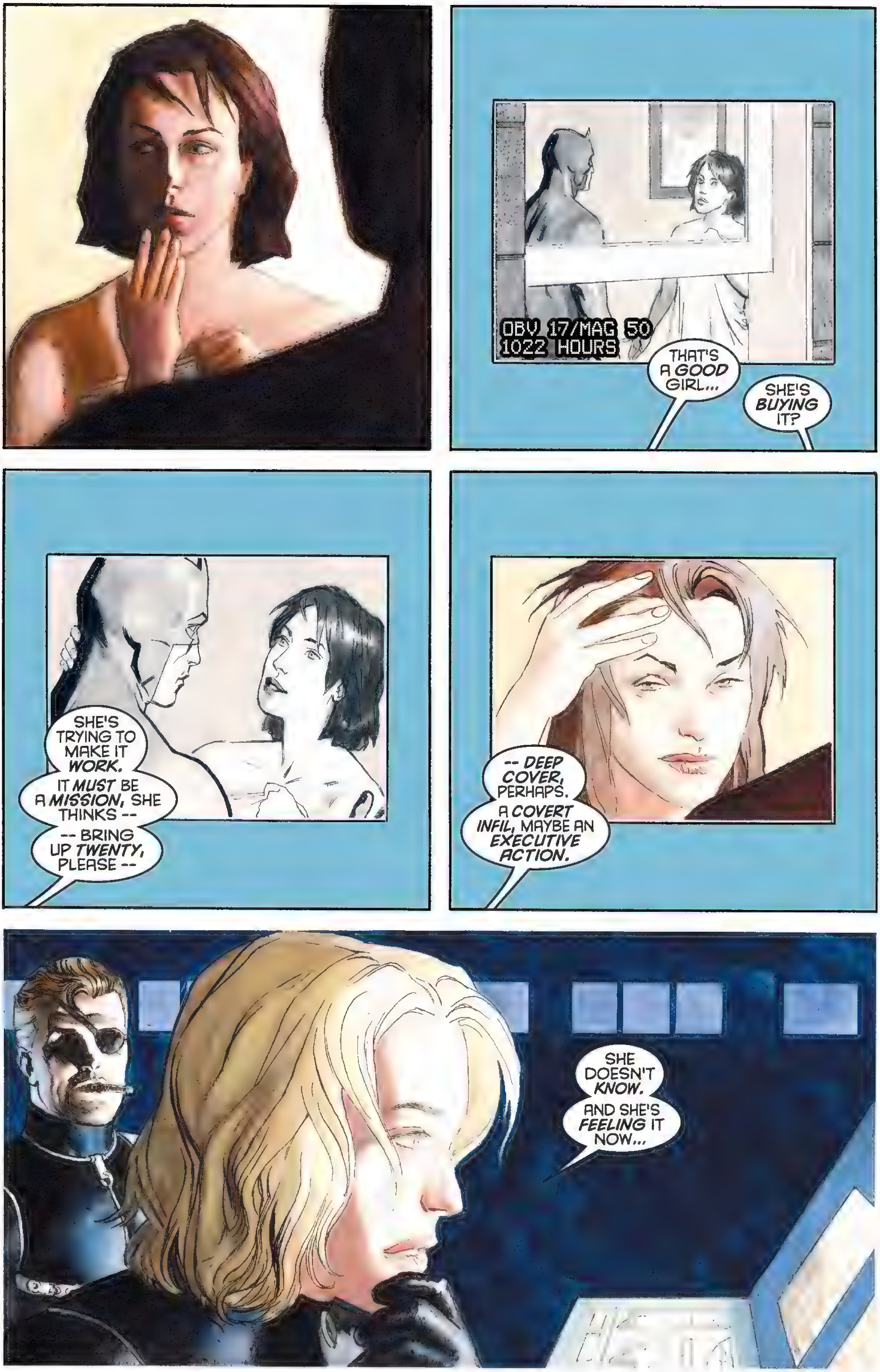
Editors NANCI DAKESIAN &
JIMMY PALMIOTTI
Editor-in-Chief
JOE QUESADA

West 87th Street, New York City.
Home of NATASHA ROMANOV.
1018 Hours Local
--ZASVETIO!
...

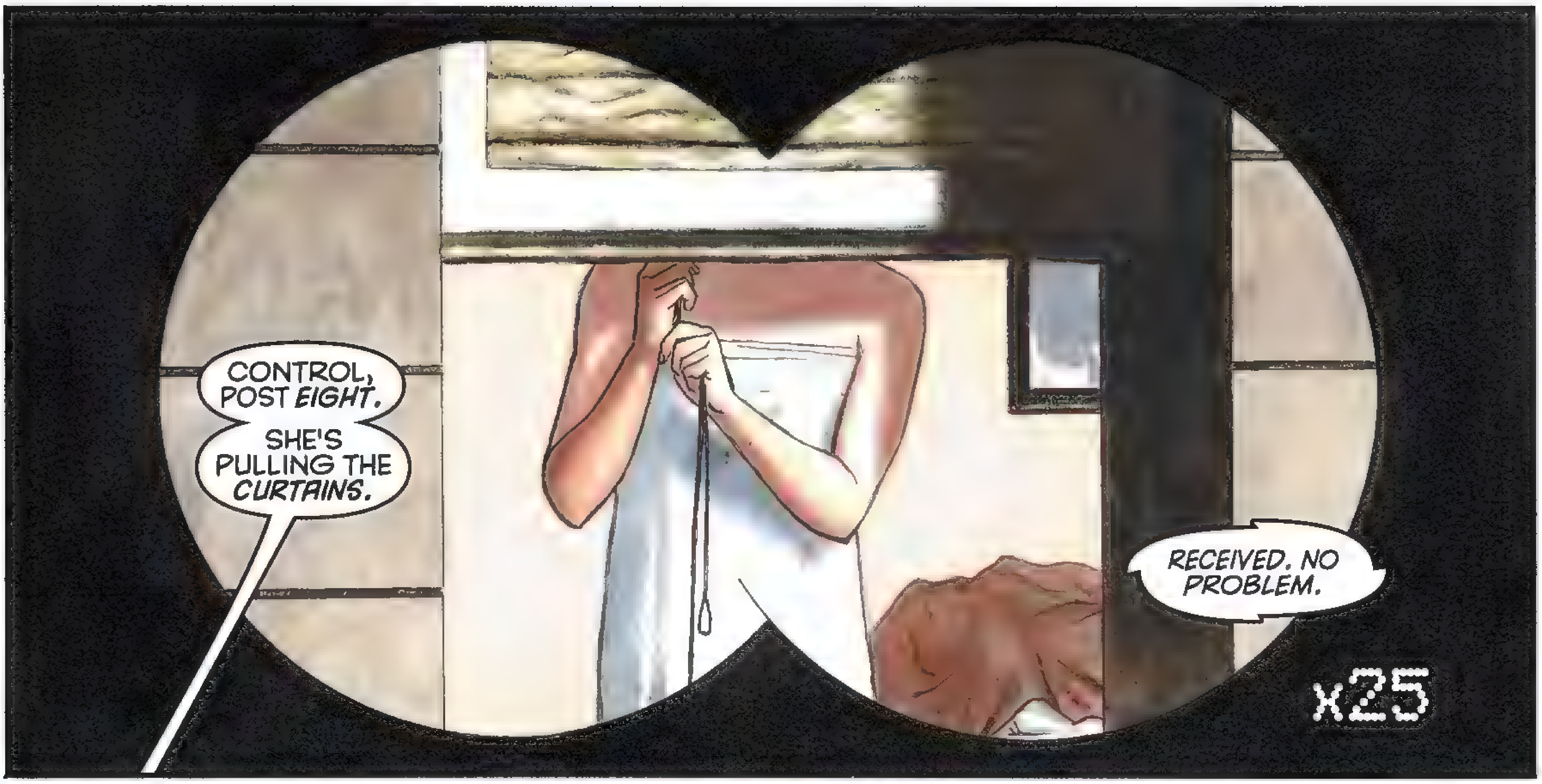
I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE YOU SAID "YES," MY NATALIA! LOVE ALWAYS, ALEXI
SOMNIA KING
KLIMT
KAR & DUR

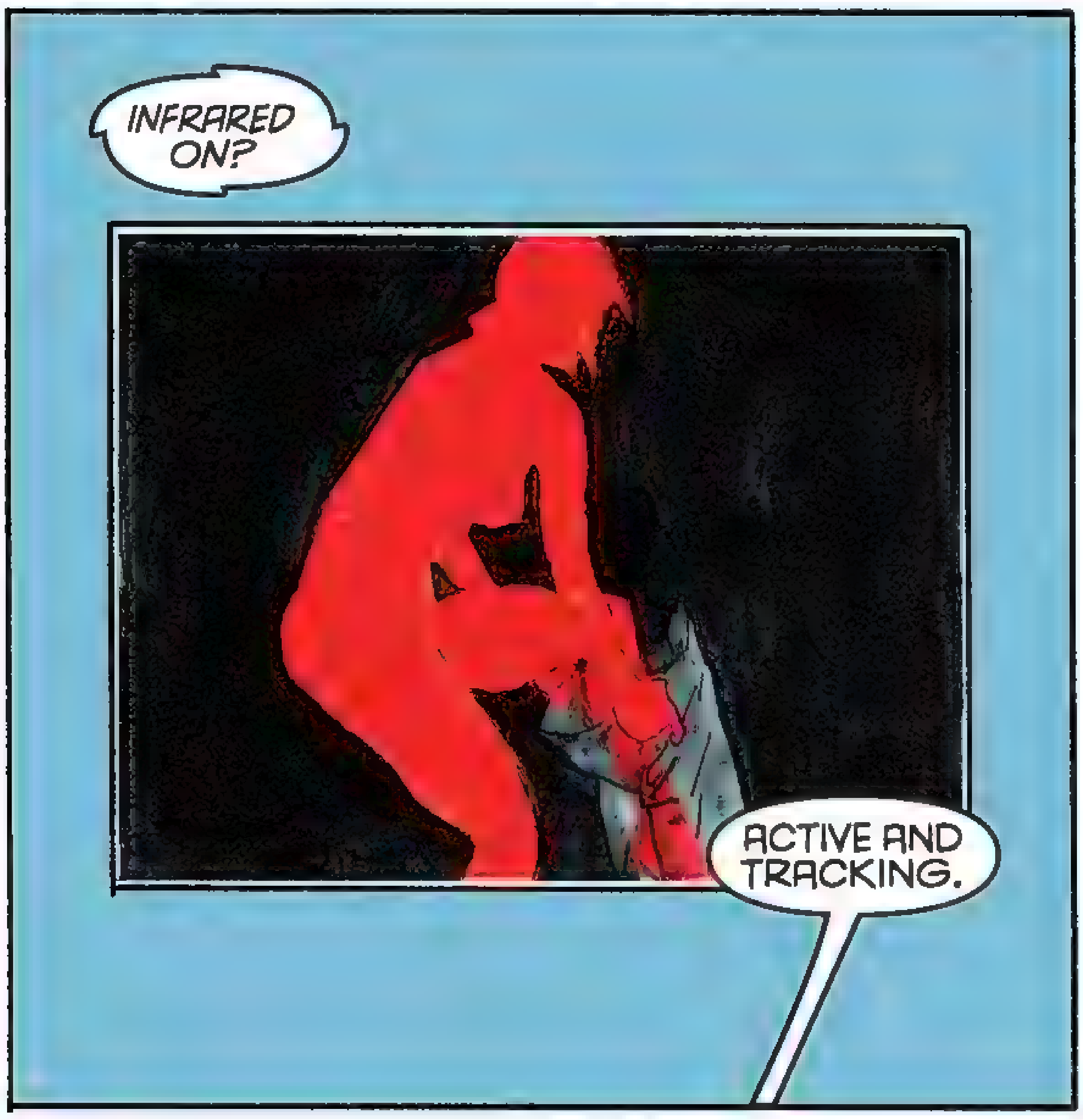

GOOD! YOU'RE *UP!*
WHOA! SURE YOU WANT TO GO *ANOTHER* ROUND?
I'LL TAKE THAT AS A *YES.*
POSHOL K CHORTU!
NOW, YOU *KNOW* WHAT IT *DOES* TO ME WHEN YOU SPEAK *RUSSIAN.*

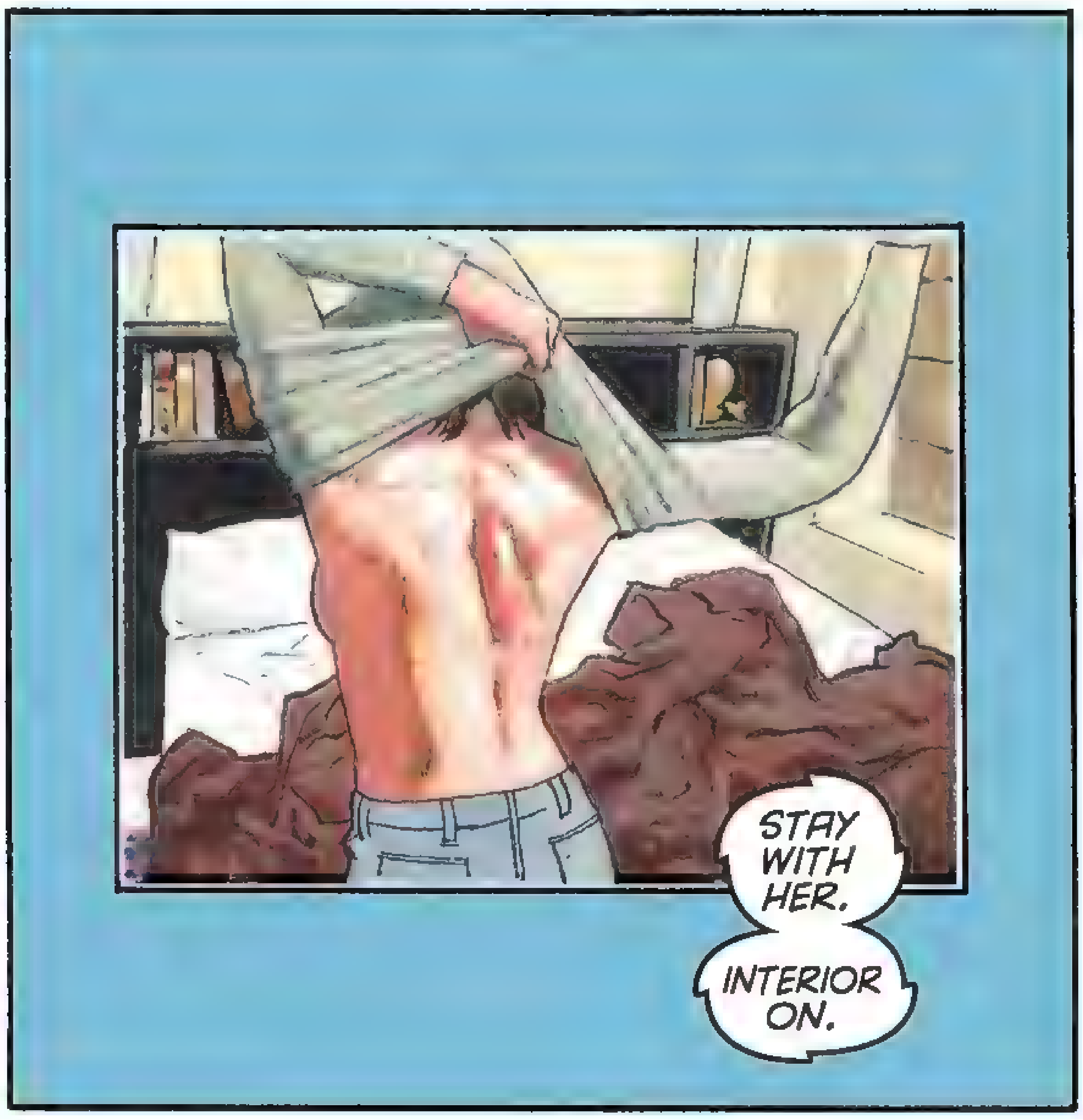
WHAT'S HE *DOING?*
UM...
...HE'S MADE *CONTACT...*
x25
TRY THAT *AGAIN* AND I'LL *KILL* YOU.
I'M *SORRY...* I THOUGHT... AFTER LAST *NIGHT...*
WHAT ARE YOU *SAYING?*
NOTHING *HAPPENED...* LAST...
...NIGHT...
BOZHE MOI...

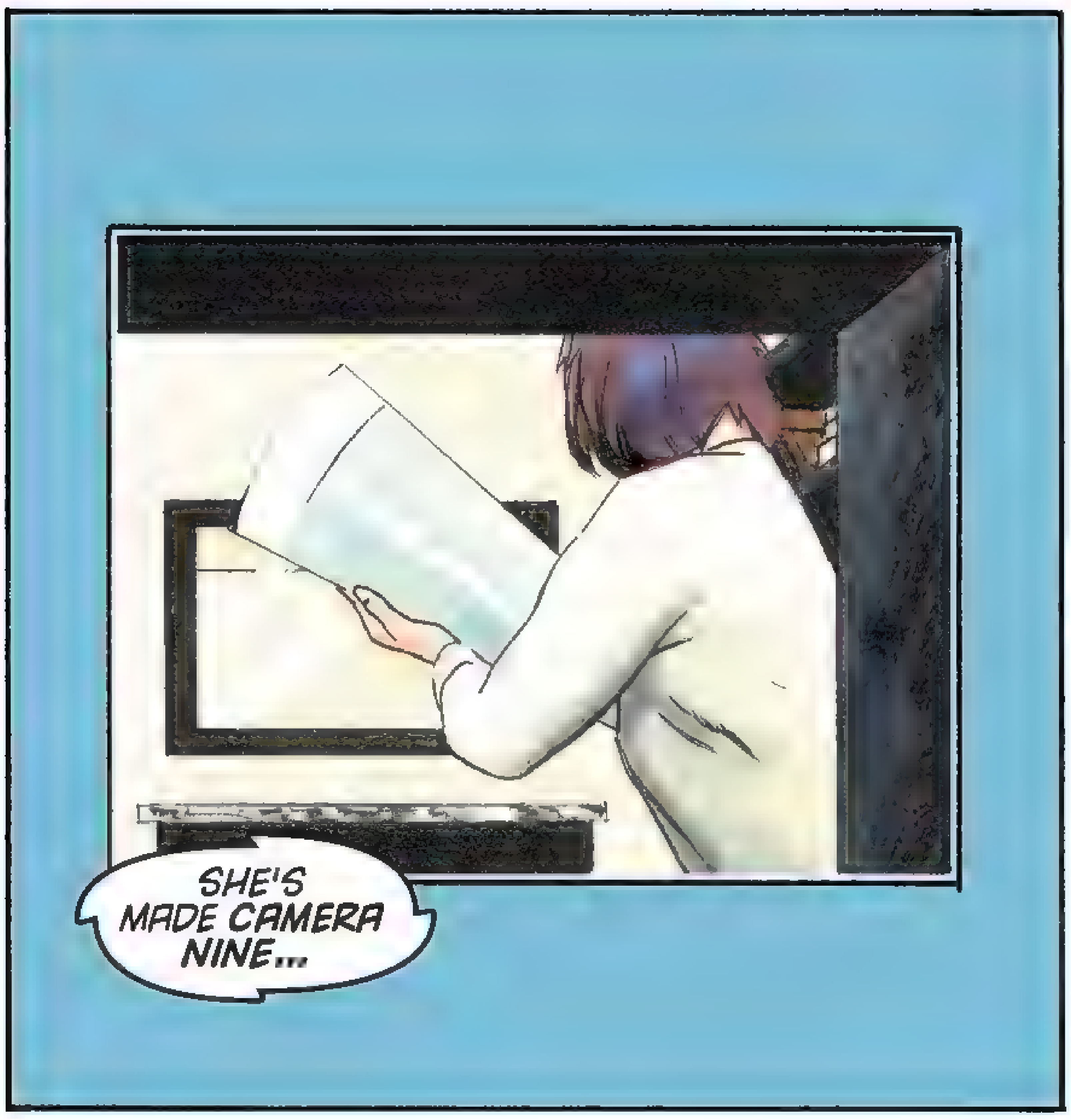

OBV 17/MAG 50
1022 HOURS
THAT'S A *GOOD* GIRL...
SHE'S *BUYING* IT?
SHE'S TRYING TO MAKE IT *WORK.*
IT *MUST* BE A *MISSION,* SHE THINKS --
-- BRING UP *TWENTY,* PLEASE --
-- *DEEP COVER,* PERHAPS.
A *COVERT INFIL,* MAYBE AN *EXECUTIVE ACTION.*
SHE DOESN'T *KNOW.*
AND SHE'S *FEELING* IT NOW...

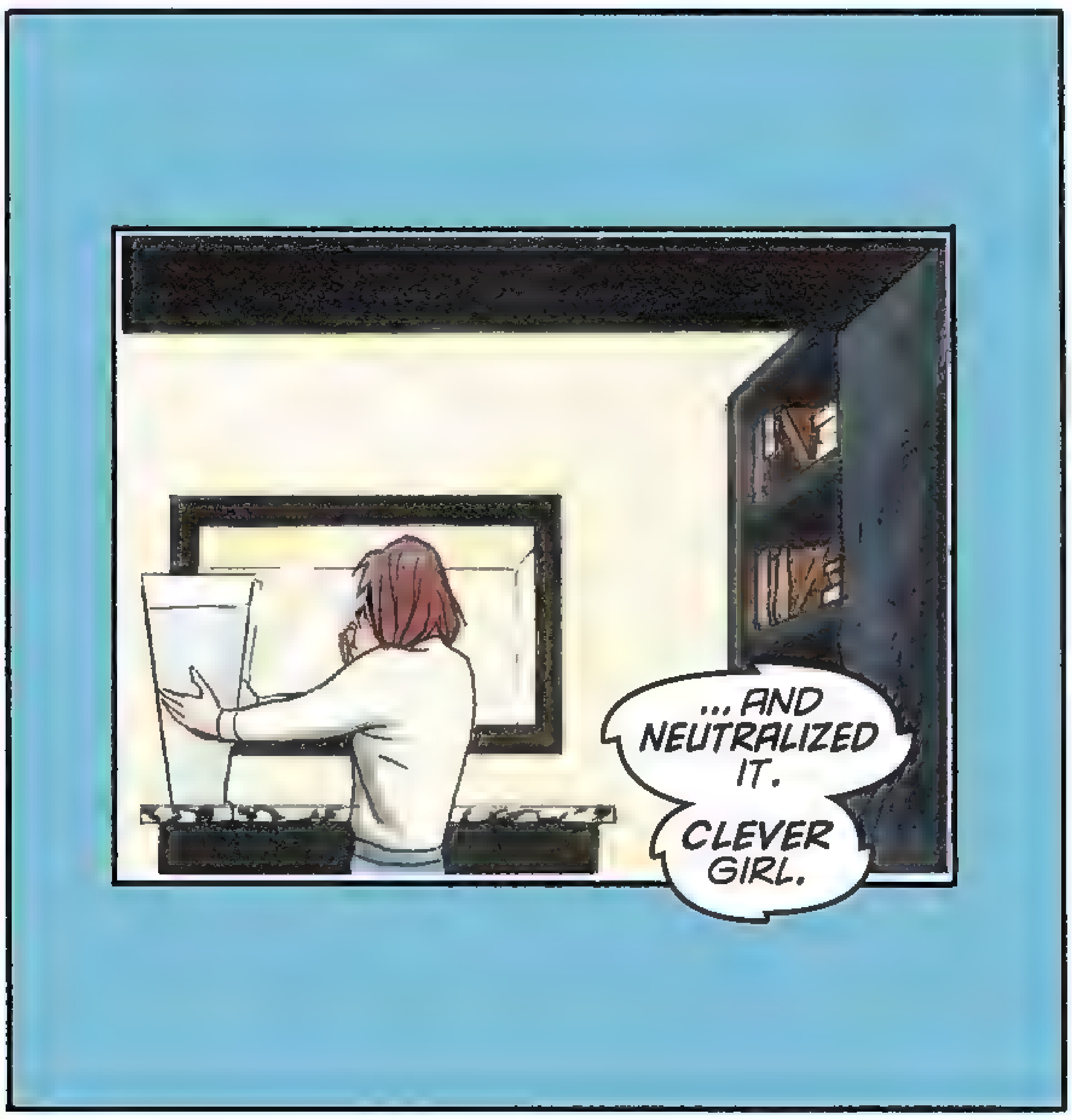
"... SHE'S TERRIFIED."
I'M SORRY... I JUST... I...
WHAT, NATASHA?
‹ALEXI!›
I HAD... I HAD A BAD DREAM --
-- ANOTHER ONE ABOUT ALEXI?
YOU POOR THING.
I'LL LEAVE YOU ALONE, NOW.
SAME TIME TONIGHT?
SURE... DA...
... I'LL BE... WAITING...


CONTROL, POST *EIGHT*.
SHE'S PULLING THE *CURTAINS*.
RECEIVED. NO PROBLEM.
x25


INFRARED ON?
ACTIVE AND TRACKING.


STAY WITH HER.
INTERIOR ON.


SHE'S MADE CAMERA NINE...


...AND NEUTRALIZED IT.
CLEVER GIRL.

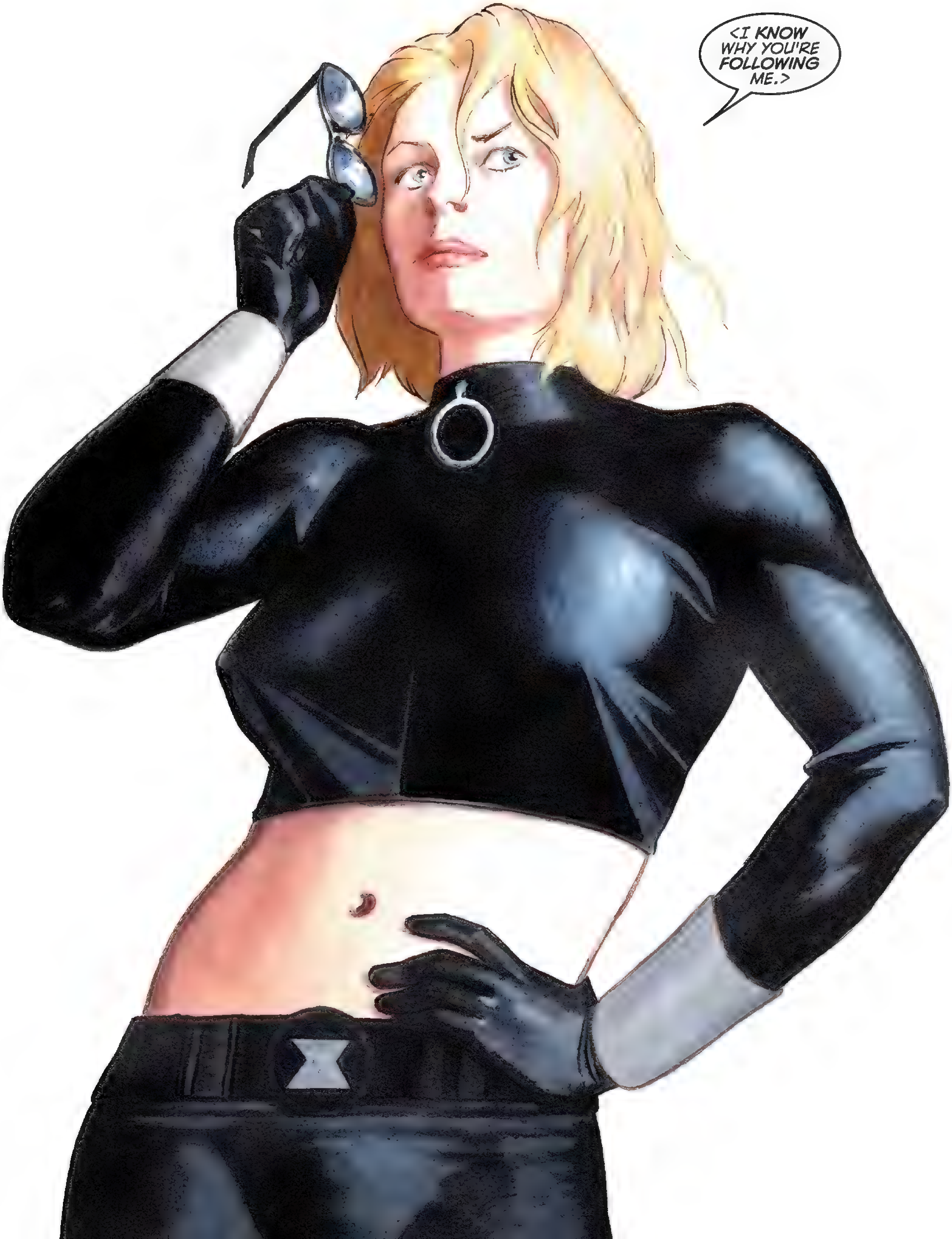
RX # 6243
ROMANOV, NATASHA
TAKE (1)
10MG TABLET
SCHER
NO REFILLS
NO.
MY NAME IS YELENA BELOVA.
YELENA BELOVA.
YELENA BELOVA. YELENA BELOVA. YELENA BELOVA.
YELENA... YELENA... YELENA...
...BELOVA...

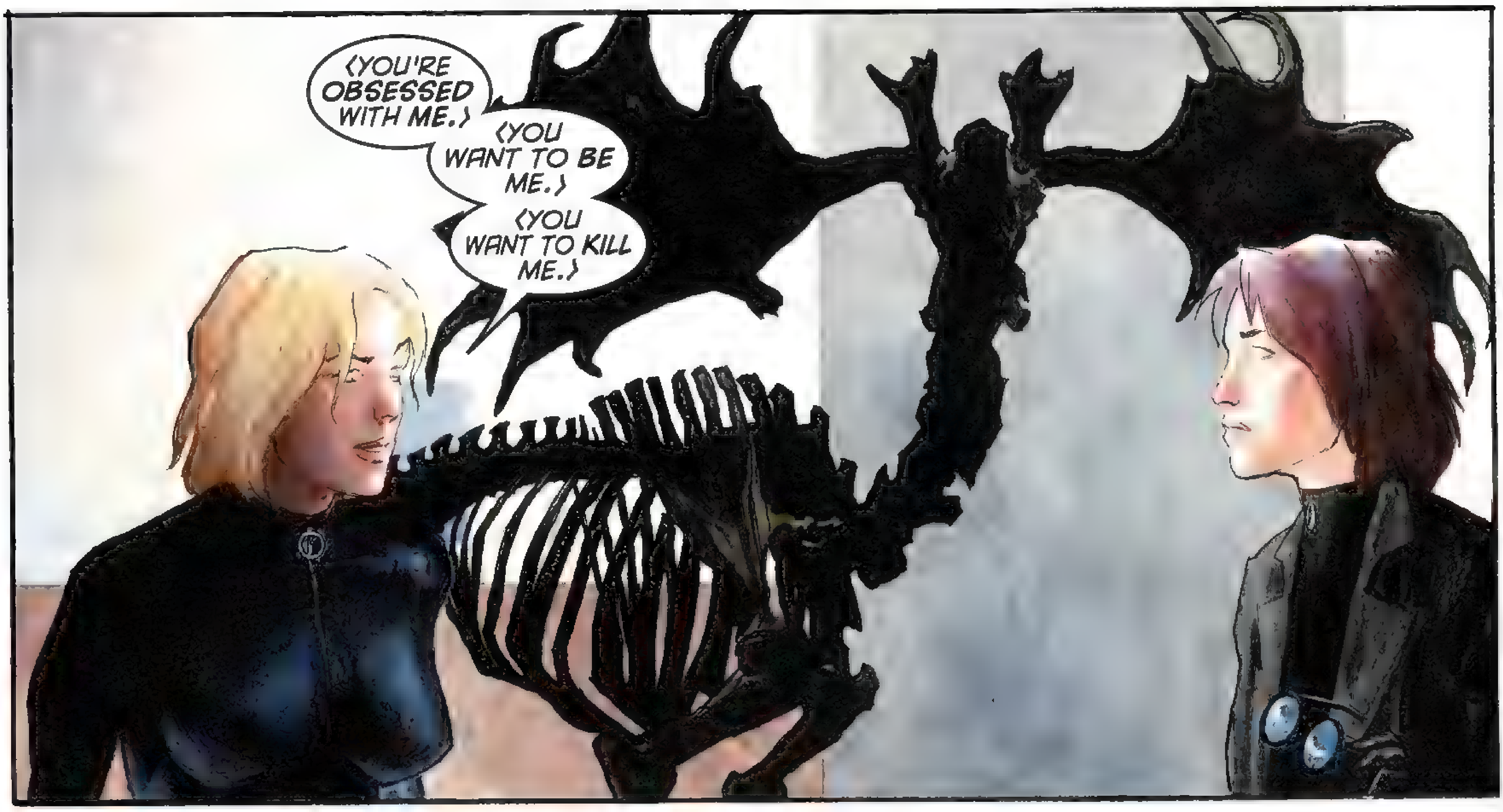
SHE'S ON THE MOVE.
GO MOBILE.
'MORNING, MISS ROMANOV.
IS SHE GOING FOR A **PHONE?**
THAT'S AFFIRM.
Bellini
‹YES?›
‹COBALT ELEVEN ALPHA. GO **SECURE.**›
‹DONE. YOU'RE IN PLACE?›
‹NO, WHAT THE --›
‹**DUBOK** DELTA. TWELVE MINUTES.›
‹I DON'T --›
KLIK

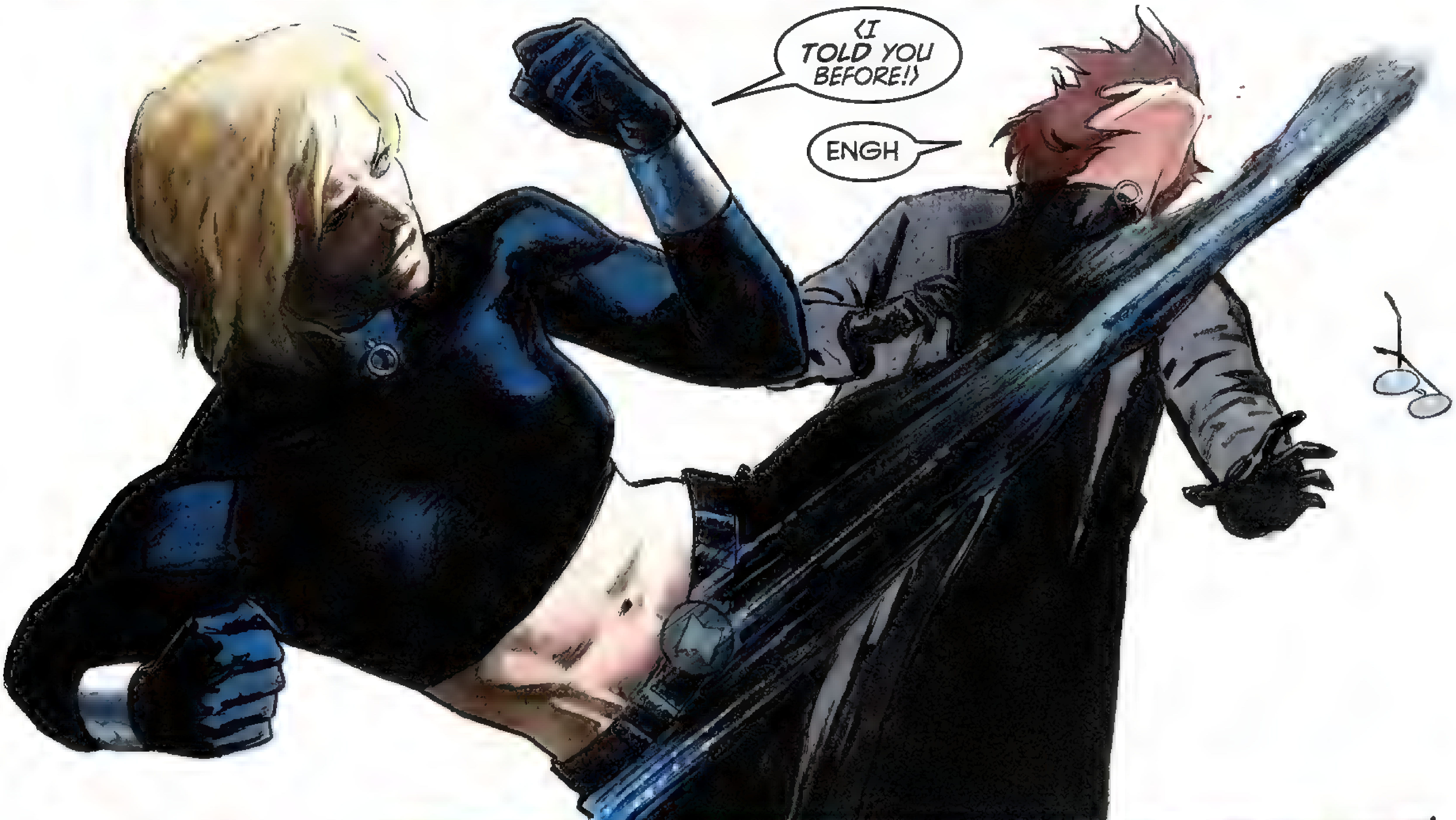
Times Square Station, New York City.
1333 Hours Local
EXCUSE ME?
I THINK YOU *DROPPED* THIS.
<GOOD LUCK, BLACK WIDOW.>

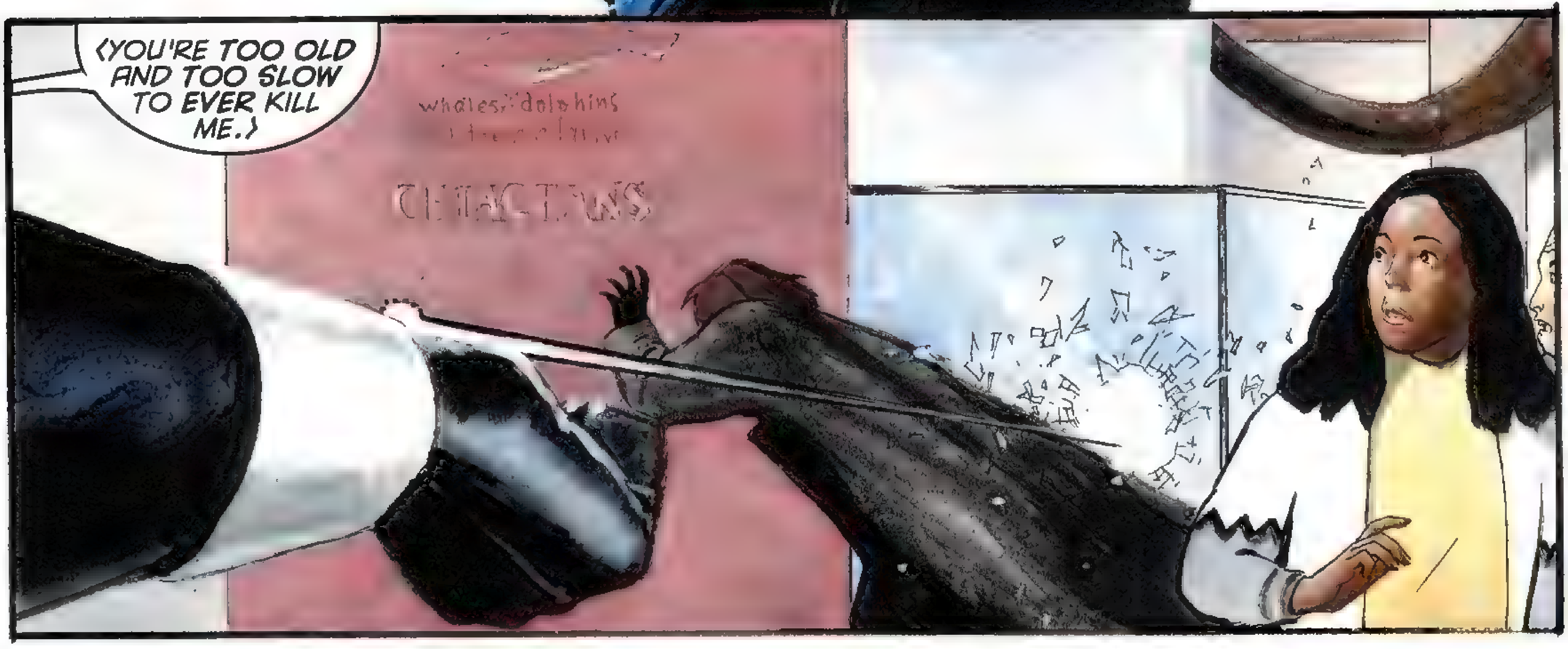
Port Authority Bus Terminal, New York City.
1429 Hours Local
MY NAME IS YELENA BELOVA.
New York Museum of Natural History.
1530 Hours
Target:
Y
B
Target:
Yelena Belova

Museum of Natural History, New York City.
1527 Hours Local
RIGHT ON TIME.
I'VE GOT THE VISUAL.
CONTROL, YOU ARE *CLEAR* TO *RUN.*
GOOD LUCK.



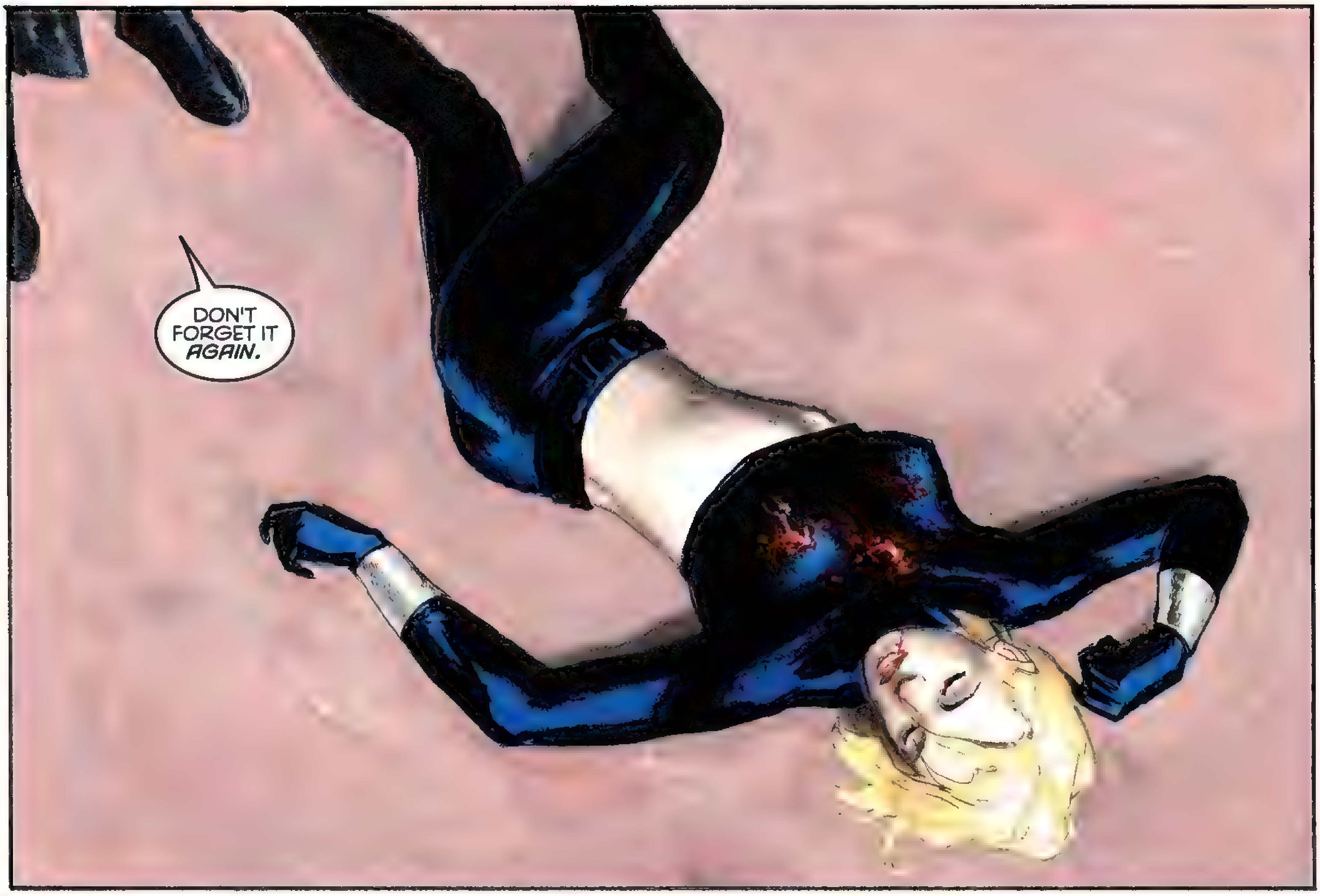

‹YOU'RE OBSESSED WITH ME.›
‹YOU WANT TO BE ME.›
‹YOU WANT TO KILL ME.›

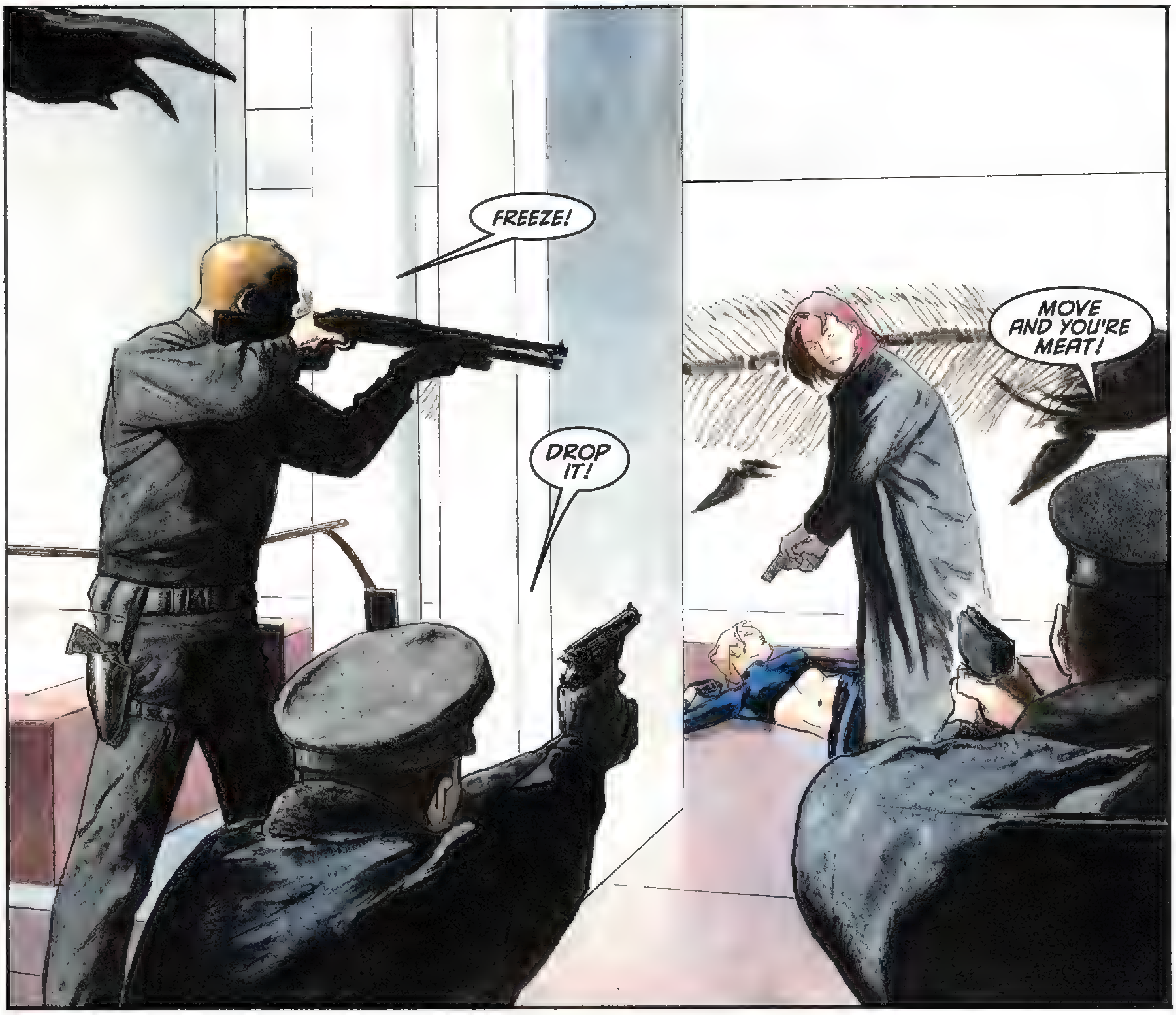

‹I TOLD YOU BEFORE!›
ENGH

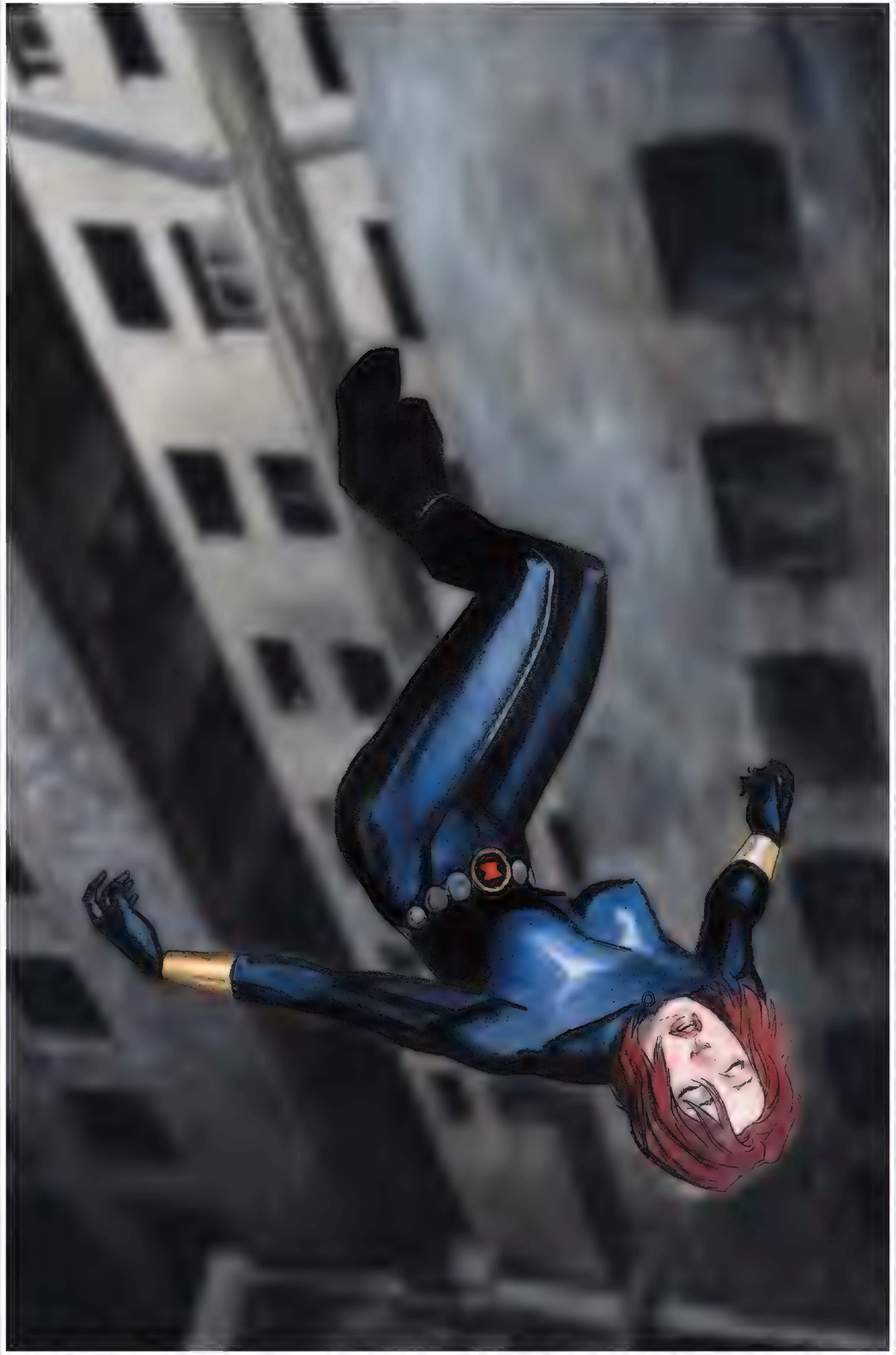

‹YOU'RE TOO OLD AND TOO SLOW TO EVER KILL ME.›
whales dolphins
CETACEANS

‹NO... WAIT --›
‹YOUR ORDERS ARE KNOWN TO ME!›
GNAH
‹THE RED ROOM WANTS ME DEAD?›
OONNF
‹YOU WON'T BE THE ONE TO DO IT!›
‹NOT YOU! NOT EVER!›
‹WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?›

I'M THE BLACK WIDOW.
MY...
...NAME...
...IS...
...NATASHA ROMANOV.


DON'T FORGET IT *AGAIN.*


FREEZE!
DROP IT!
MOVE AND YOU'RE MEAT!



BREAKDOWN 2

BREAKDOWN

PART 2 of 3

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Museum of Natural History, New York City.
1531 Hours Local
DROP YOUR WEAPON!

THAT'S A GOOD GIRL...
DON'T HURT ME...
DON'T MOVE.
SHE TRIES ANYTHING, SHOOT HER...
THOUGHT YOU *SPIES* ONLY COMMITTED *MURDER* IN THE *DARK*...
NOT... MURDER...
... SUICIDE...
WHATEVER. SAVE IT FOR YOUR *ATTORNEY* --

-- RED --
DON'T SHOOT DON'T
YOU'LL *HIT* JARRET!
DROP THE *GUNS* OR I ADD HIM TO THE MUSEUM'S *PERMANENT COLLECTION*.
DO IT *NOW*.
YOU CAN'T GET *OUT* OF HERE, WE'VE GOT THE PLACE *SURROUNDED* --
THERE IS *ALWAYS* AN *ESCAPE ROUTE*.
BLAM

LOOK OUT!
AHH!
THAT BI--
KKRAKUMM

KLANG-A
KLANG-A
KLANG-A
EXIT
POST SIX, PACKAGE IS IN THE OPEN.
TEAM UNCLE, WE'VE GOT HER...

LITTLE HELP HERE?
CLEAR THE WAY!
NYPD
AMBULANCE
WELL?
DEAD AS CAESAR.
BUT I'M GETTING BETTER.

BRAVO. YOU'VE TURNED HER INTO A *MURDERER.*
WELL DONE.
AMBULANCE
... A MURDERER ON THE *RUN.*
WHY ARE YOU *DOING* THIS TO *HER?*
SHE THINKS SHE'S NATASHA ROMANOV. SHE THINKS SHE KILLED YELENA BELOVA.
BUT SHE *IS* YELENA BELOVA.
SHE'S COMING UNDONE.
BUT *WHY,* DAMMIT?
BECAUSE I *WANT* IT THAT WAY.
IF YOU'RE *WORRIED* FOR *HER,* GO AND KEEP *WATCH.*
BUT *DON'T* INTERFERE.
I *WON'T* LET HER *DIE.*
I KNOW.

Central Park, North of Belvedere Castle, New York City.
1603 Hours, Local

SHE'S EVADED PRIMARY PURSUIT...
...LOOKS LIKE SHE'S GOING TO GROUND.
WHAT'S HER BEARING?
HEADING NORTHEAST.
SHE'S MAKING FOR THE SAFEHOUSE ON 128th.
SHE'LL NEED TO CHANGE CLOTHES FIRST.
THAT WON'T EVEN SLOW HER DOWN.
YOU BETTER GET MOVING YOURSELF.

Northeast Boathouse, Central Park, New York City.
1738 Hours Local
I NEED YOUR COAT.
WHAT?
GIVE ME YOUR COAT!
GO TO HELL!
HELL? YOU WANT TO SEE HELL?
TAKE IT OFF OR YOU'LL BEAT ME THERE.
BUY YOURSELF A NEW ONE, FRIEND.

<BLACK WIDOW! BUT-BUT Y-YOU WERE DEAD, IT WAS ON THE NEWS -->
NYET.
<DAMMIT, MIKKI, YOU KNOW YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO USE THE RADIOS -->

<YOU'RE NOT MIKKI.>
<IDIOT.>
OOOHFF
<YOU LOOK WELL FOR A WOMAN WHO WAS MURDERED THIS AFTERNOON.>
<NO, NO SMALL TALK, GENERAL STELYENKO.>
<I WANT FIFTY PERCENT.>

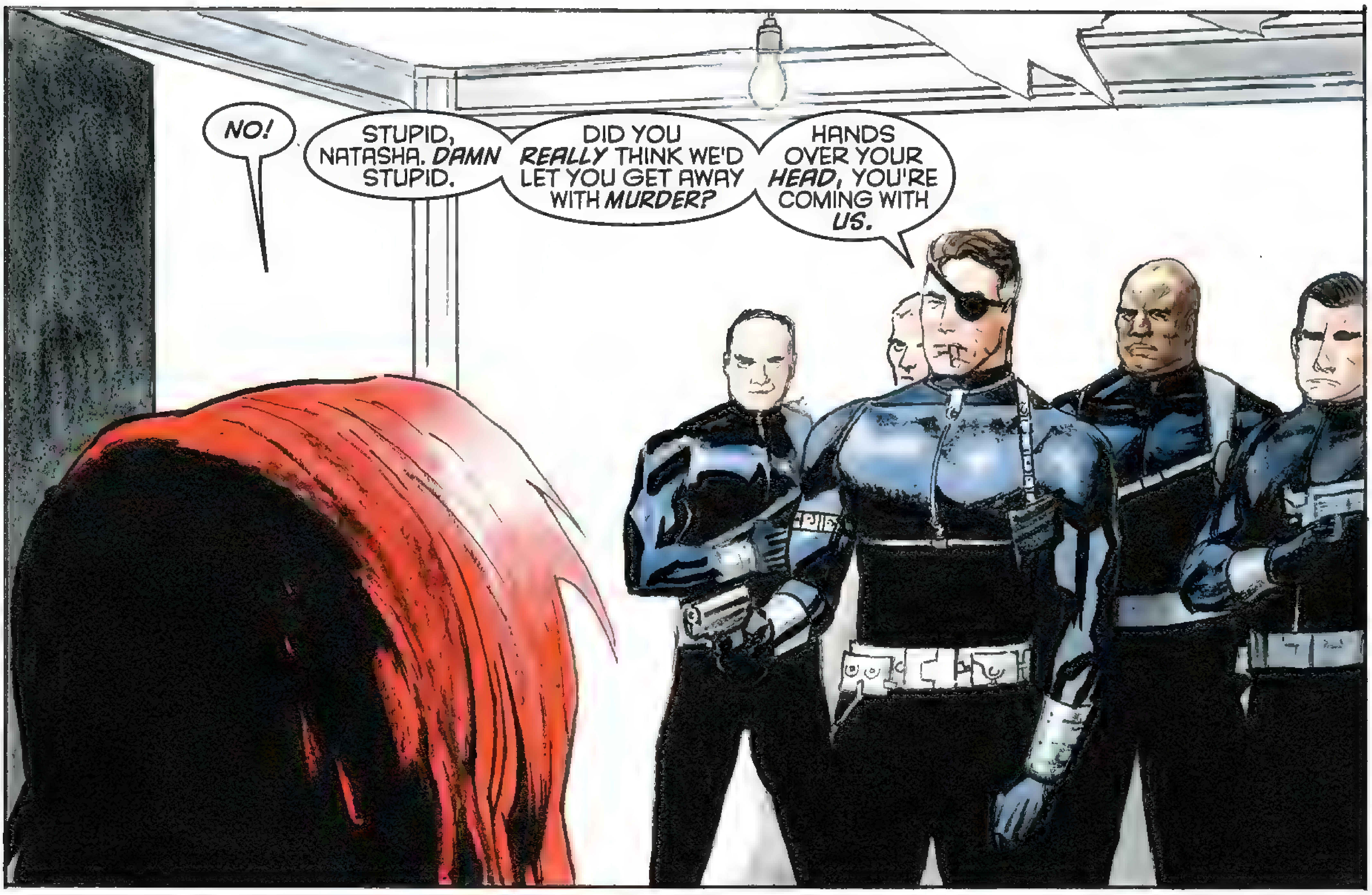
<FIFTY PERCENT OF WHAT?>
<WHATEVER YOU HAVE GOING WITH THE RHAPASTANI GOVERNMENT.>
<AND WHAT WOULD THAT BE?>
<I DON'T KNOW. I DON'T REALLY CARE.>
<BUT I KNOW YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING IN THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY, AND I WANT IN.>
<WHATEVER IT IS, I'M SURE S.H.I.E.L.D. WOULDN'T APPROVE.
<WHICH IS WHY I'VE TAKEN CARE OF THAT PROBLEM FOR YOU.>
<...FURY AND HIS DOGS ARE SO BUSY CHASING THEIR ROGUE AGENT ROMANOV THEY DON'T EVEN KNOW YOU'RE HERE.>
<INTERESTING.>
<AND YOU ORCHESTRATED THIS BY YOURSELF? FRAMING ROMANOV FOR YOUR MURDER?>
<WHY ARE YOU SURPRISED?>
<I'D HARDLY BE WORTHY OF THE NAME BLACK WIDOW IF I COULDN'T DO SUCH A THING, GENERAL.>

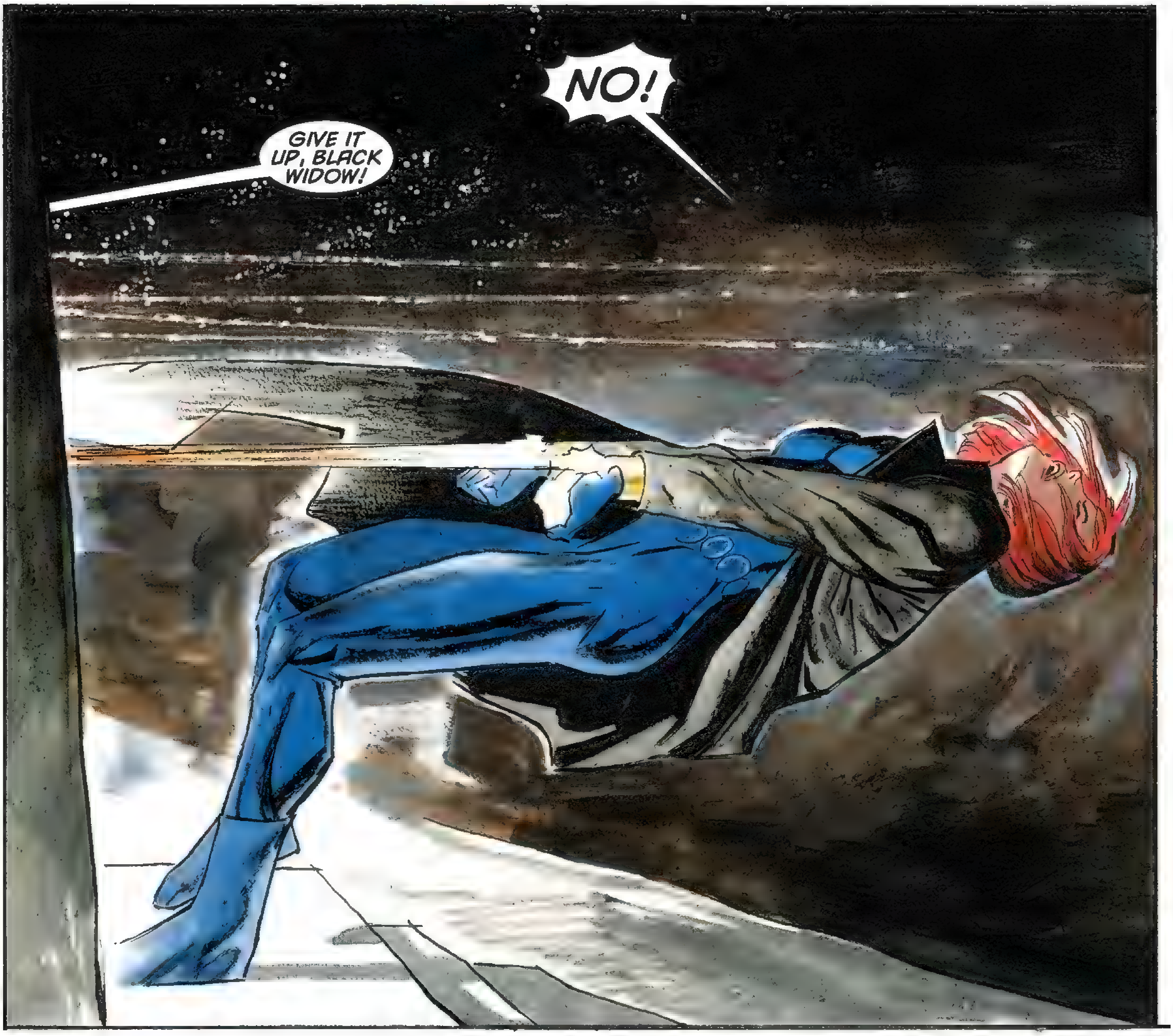
129th Street and Broadway, New York City.
2108 Hours Local
$2.99
Salad & Roll
ABOUT TWO MINUTES AWAY, SIR.
NYC POLICE
ACKNOWLEDGED. PULL BACK, LET HER RUN.
TEN-FOUR.

JUST A *LITTLE* FARTHER...
... YOU'LL BE *SAFE* YOU CAN DO IT YOU CAN *SURVIVE*...
... YOU'RE NATASHA ROMANOV YOU'RE *BLACK WIDOW* YOU'RE YELENA BELOVA YOU'RE...
... YOU'RE...
38TH ST
... SAFE...

<SO TELL ME...>
<...HOW DID YOUR DATE WITH VLADIMIR GO?>
<YOUR AUNT OKSANA SAID HE WAS QUITE HANDSOME.>
<OLGA, GENERAL. MY AUNT'S NAME IS OLGA.>
<FORGIVE ME, MY MEMORY IS FADING WITH AGE. DID YOU HAVE FUN WITH HIM?>
<ARE YOU JEALOUS, GENERAL STELYENKO?>
<OF VLADIMIR?>
<YES, OF VLADIMIR.>
<I AM TOO OLD TO SUFFER SUCH THINGS, MY DEAR.>
<VLADIMIR CAN'T TELL YOU WHERE TO FIND OUR MERCHANDISE OR BUYER.>
<THIS WILL TELL YOU WHERE TO FIND THE BOMBS.>
<NOW GO AND EARN YOUR TWENTY PERCENT, BLACK WIDOW.>

83 East 138th Street, New York City.
0003 Hours Local
...HAS TO BE *HERE*...
...IT *HAS* TO BE...
AH!


NO!
STUPID, NATASHA. *DAMN* STUPID.
DID YOU *REALLY* THINK WE'D LET YOU GET AWAY WITH *MURDER?*
HANDS OVER YOUR *HEAD*, YOU'RE COMING WITH *US.*


NO!
GIVE IT UP, BLACK WIDOW!

THERE'S NOWHERE WE CAN'T FIND YOU!
NOWHERE, YOU *HEAR* ME, NATASHA?
THIS IS *SADISM*, FURY.
NO.
IT'S CALLED *ESPIONAGE*.

The Bronx, Hunts Point.
0256 Hours Local
...ALL UNITS APB IN EFFECT FOR SUSPECT NATASHA ROMANOV...
...FEMALE CAUCASIAN, RED HAIR...
NYPD
...ARMED AND DANGEROUS. EXERCISE EXTREME CAUTION...

BREAKDOWN 3

Nyack-on-Hudson, New York.
0648 Hours, Zulu.
LOCATION?
DEE
I'M UPSTATE, *NYACK.*
YOU?
HUNT'S POINT, LISTENING TO YOUR -- SORRY, *YELENA'S* -- HEARTBEAT.
INTERESTING LISTENING?
IT'S *RACING.* SHE'S *HAVING BAD DREAMS.*
AND HOW'S *YOUR* HEART RATE?
CLIMBING. I'VE GOT A *SHADOW...*
...FOLLOWED ME FROM THE *CITY.*
WHAT? WHY?
BEST GUESS? *STELYENKO* MADE ME AS A *FAKE* AND NOW WANTS ME *DEAD.*
WHAT'RE YOU GOING TO *DO?*
WHAT I *ALWAYS* DO...

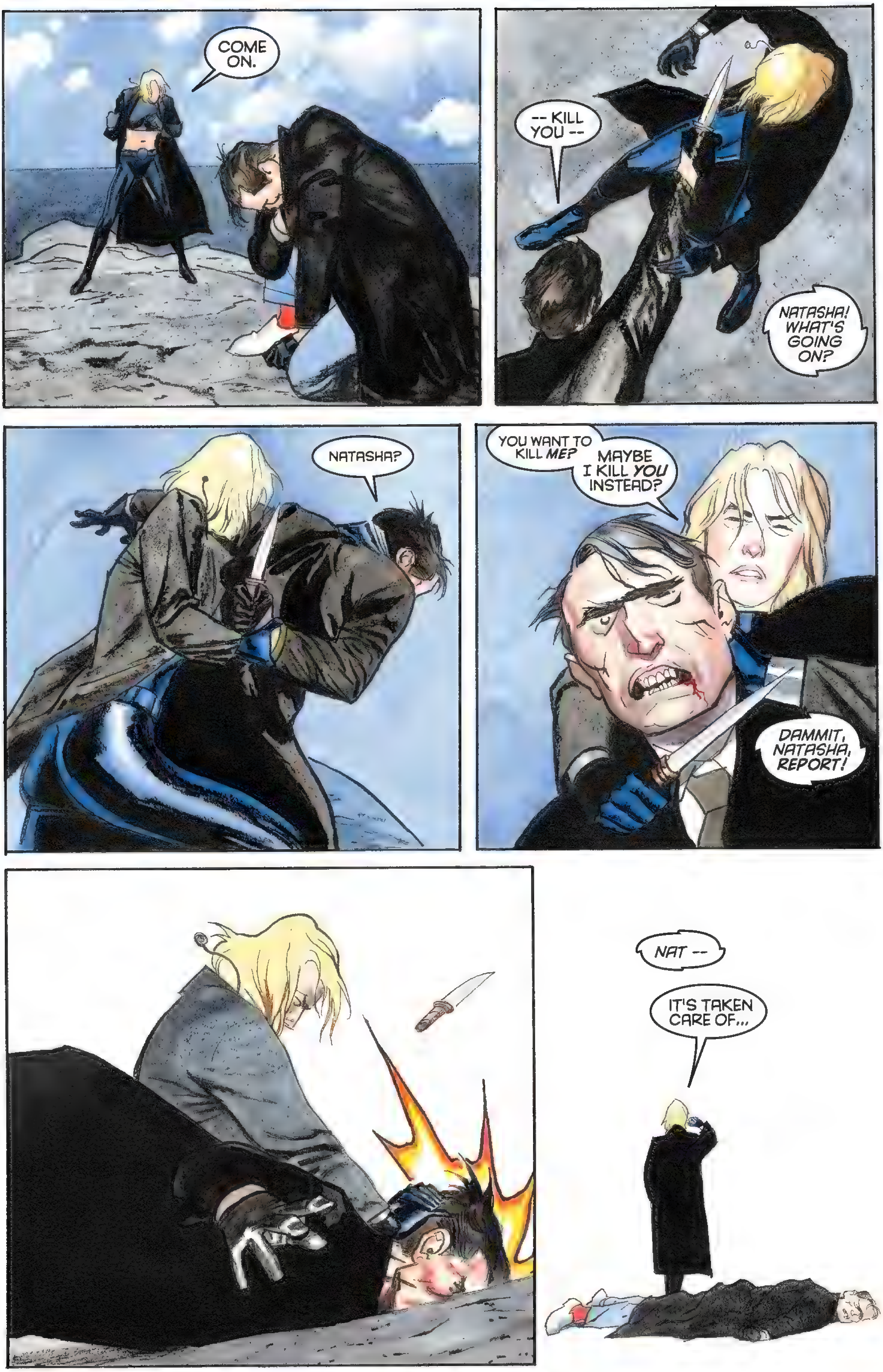
"... SURVIVE."
IMPOSTOR! YOU ARE NOT THE *REAL* BLACK WIDOW --
ACTUALLY... ... I AM.

BREAKDOWN

PART 3 of 3

Script DEVIN GRAYSON & GREG RUCKA
Art SCOTT HAMPTON
Lettering RS & COMICRAFT's Saida Temofonte!

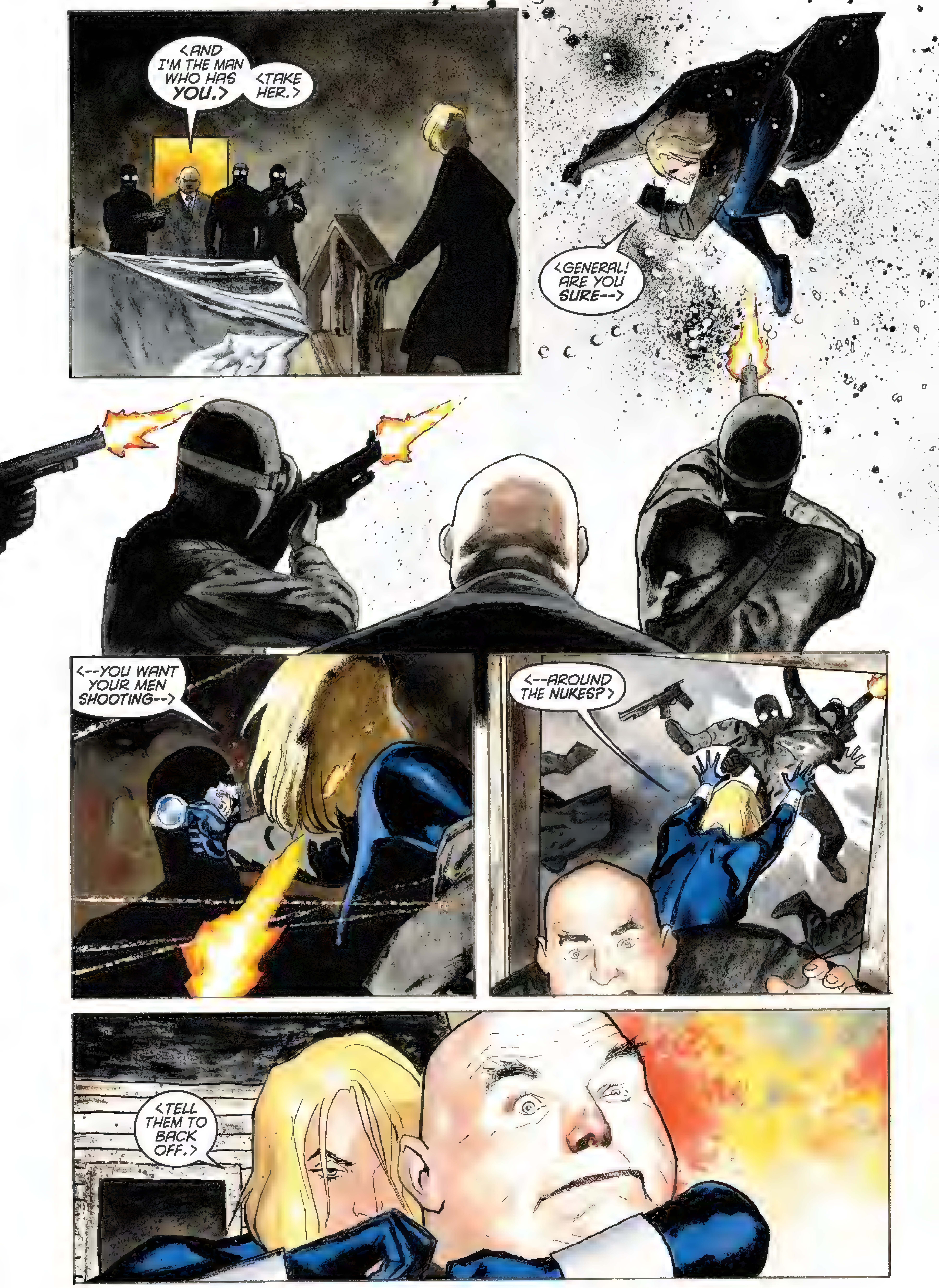
Assistant Editor KELLY LAMY
Editors NANCI DAKESIAN & STUART MOORE
Editor-in-Chief JOE QUESADA

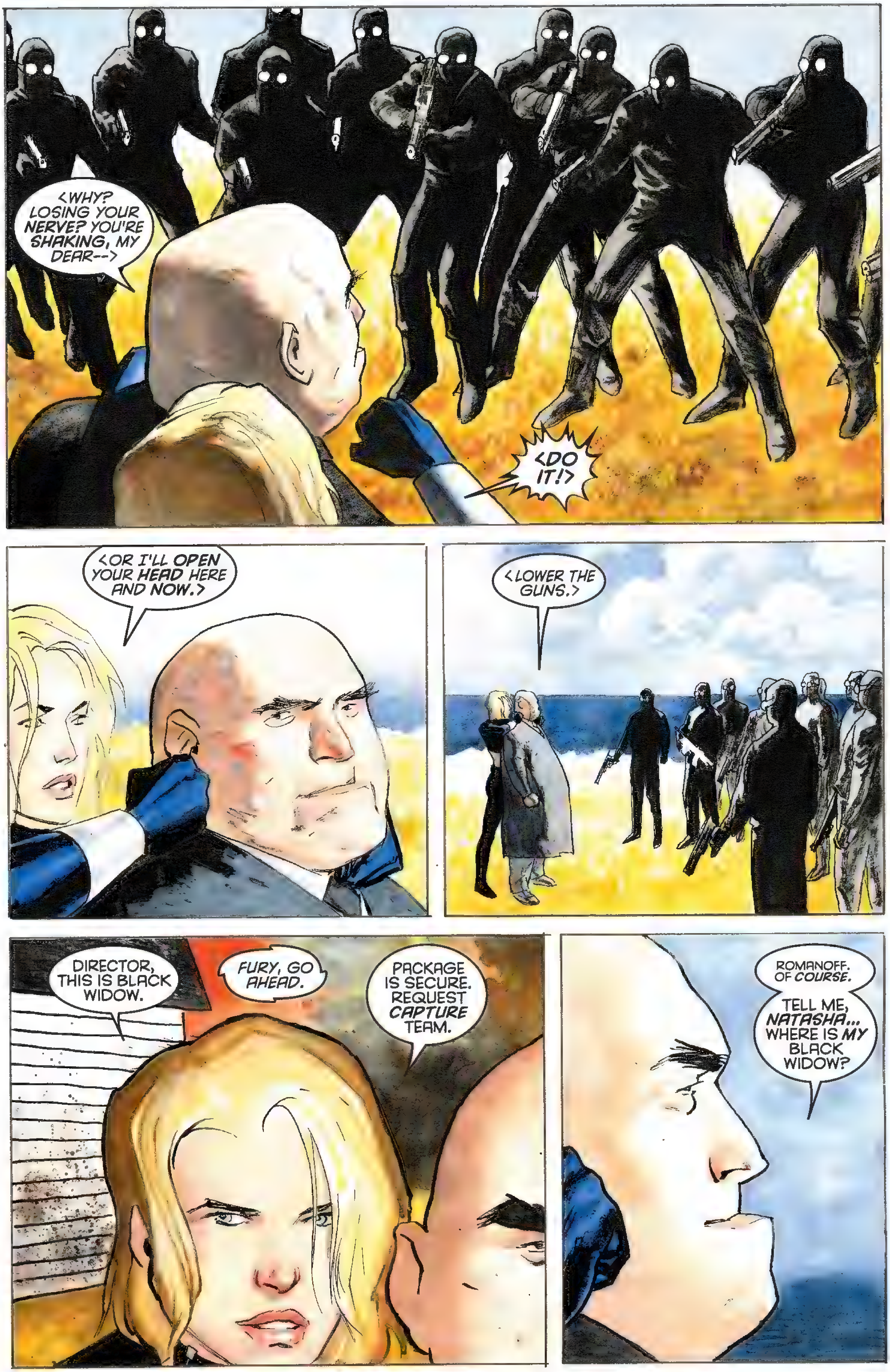

COME ON.
-- KILL YOU --
NATASHA! WHAT'S GOING ON?
NATASHA?
YOU WANT TO KILL *ME?*
MAYBE I KILL *YOU* INSTEAD?
DAMMIT, NATASHA, REPORT!
NAT --
IT'S TAKEN CARE OF...

The Bronx, Hunts Point.
0650 Hours, Local.
...NOW IT'S *YOUR* TURN.
GOOD MORNING.
POSHOL NA HUI!
IT'S *ALL RIGHT*. COME WITH *ME* --
NYET!
WAIT!
I'M NOT *HER*, NOT *ROMANOFF* --
I *KNOW*, IT'S OKAY, I *KNOW* WHO YOU ARE --
-- NOT NATASHA, NEVER *LOVED* YOU -
-- NEVER *KISSED...* YOU...
-- I *KNOW!*

...YOU ...KNOW?
YES.
THEN *WHO...*
...WHO AM I?
YELENA BELOVA.
YELENA...
...I'M... YELENA BELOVA...
...THE *BLACK WIDOW...*

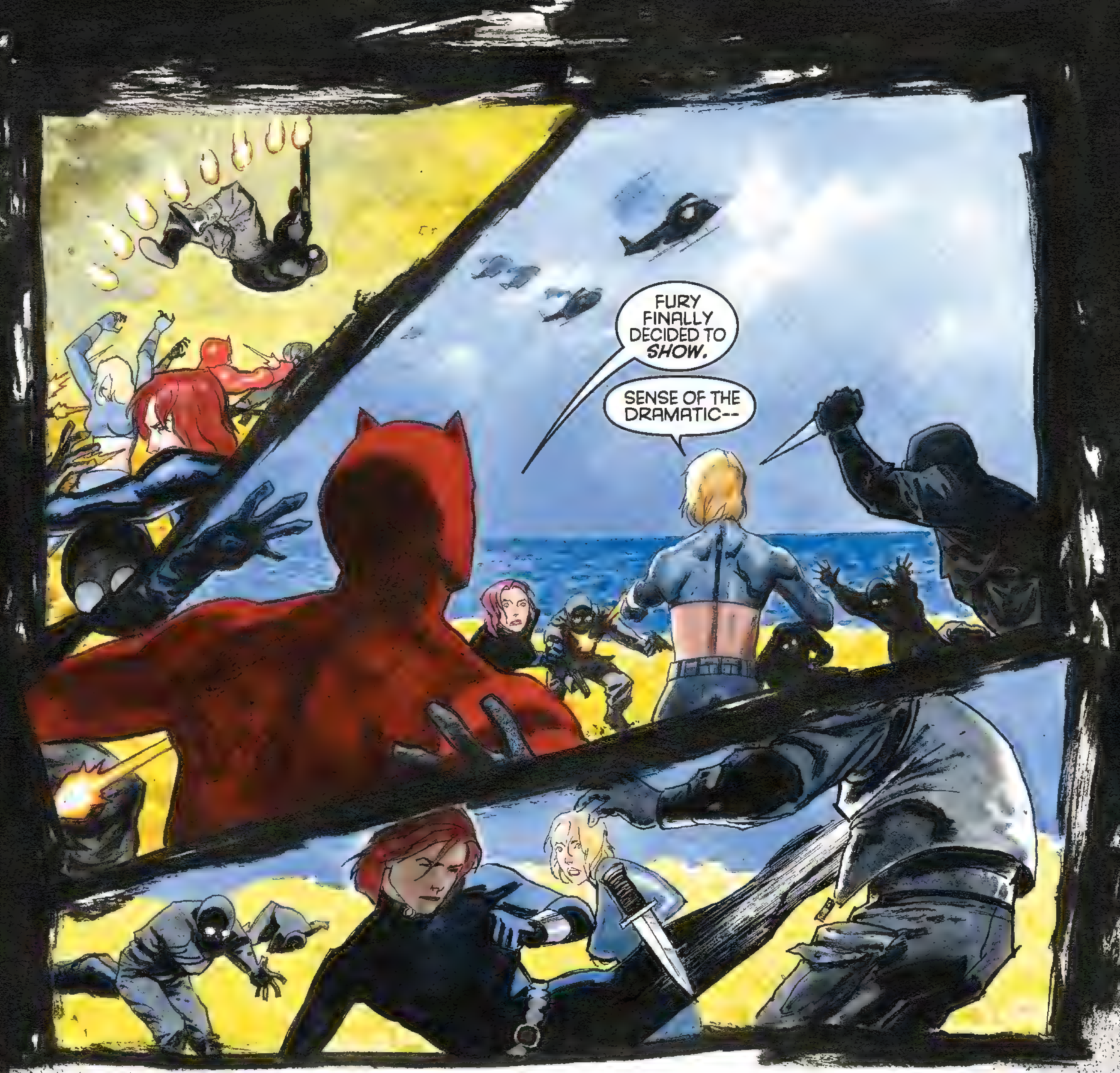
Nyack-on-Hudson, New York.
0812 Hours, Zulu.
<GENERAL, PLEASE RESPOND.>
<BELOVA? IS THAT YOU?>
<ALIVE AND KICKING. YOUR MAN FAILED.>
<SO I GATHER.>
<YOU'RE NOT YELENA BELOVA.>
<CORRECT.>
<THEN WHO ARE YOU?>
<I'M THE WOMAN WHO HAS WHAT YOU WANT, GENERAL.>
<I'M THE WOMAN WITH YOUR NUKES.>
ПИРП
ВЕСЕЛЫ

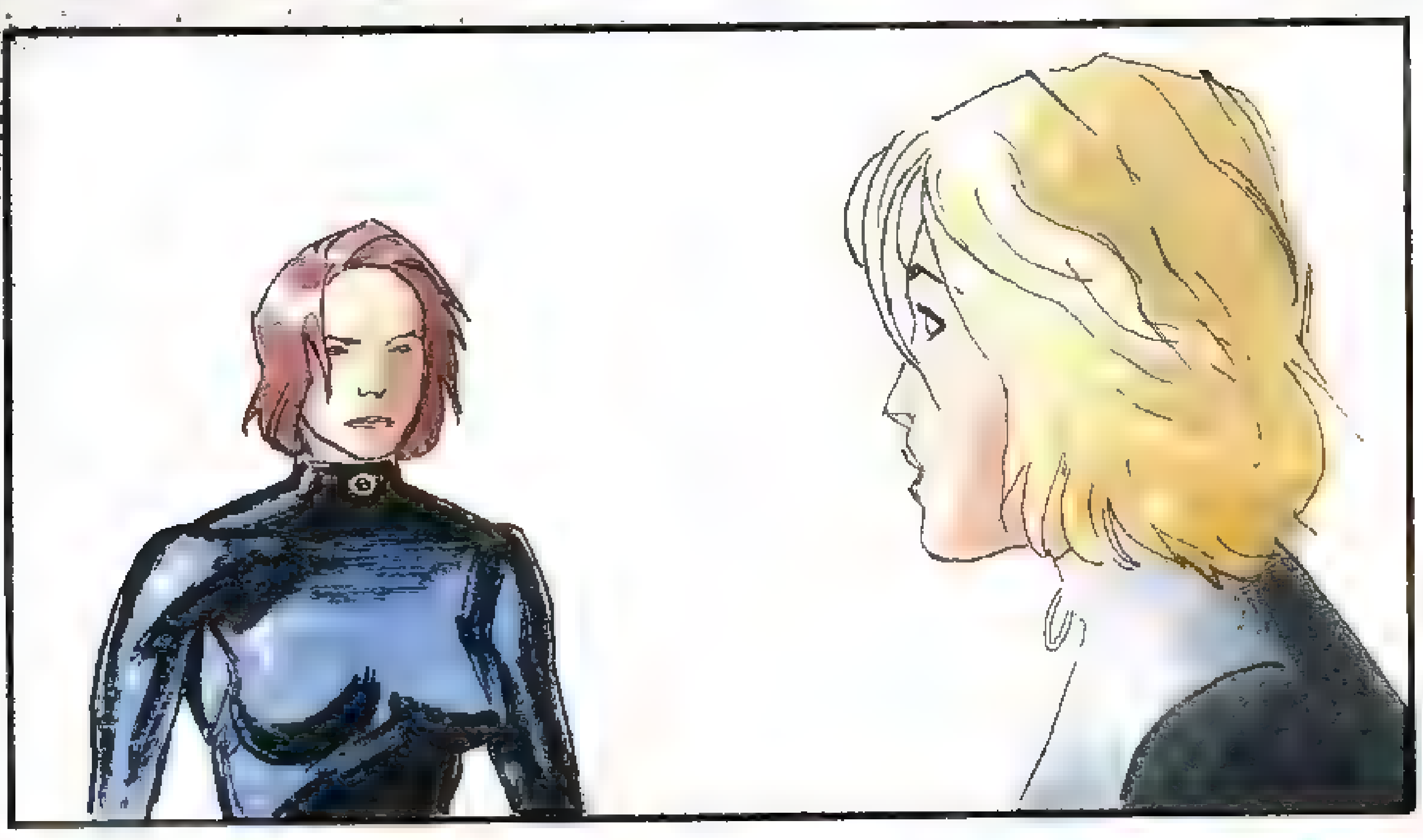

<AND I'M THE MAN WHO HAS YOU.>
<TAKE HER.>
<GENERAL! ARE YOU SURE-->
<--YOU WANT YOUR MEN SHOOTING-->
<--AROUND THE NUKES?>
<TELL THEM TO BACK OFF.>

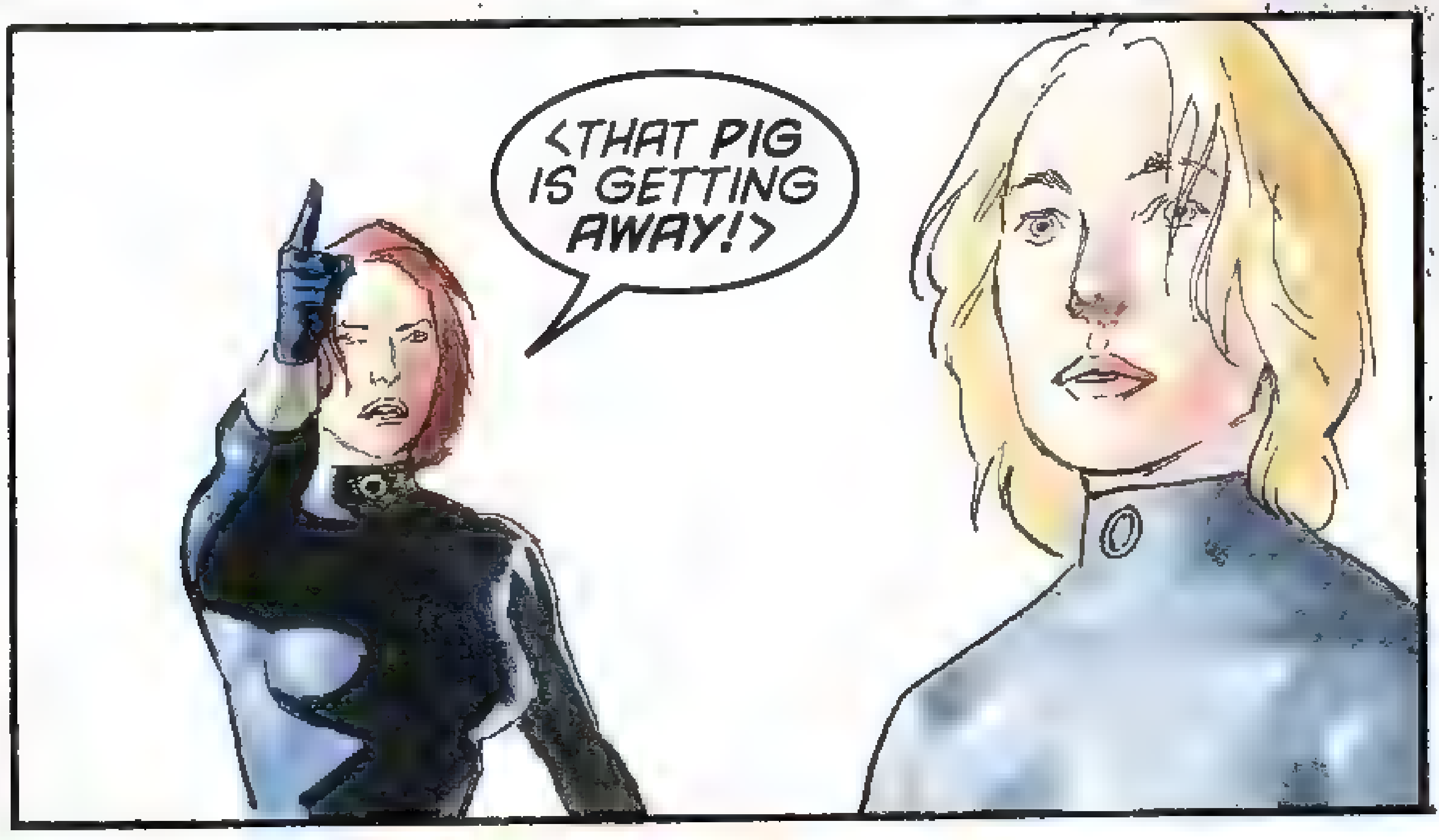

<WHY? LOSING YOUR NERVE? YOU'RE SHAKING, MY DEAR-->
<DO IT!>
<OR I'LL OPEN YOUR HEAD HERE AND NOW.>
<LOWER THE GUNS.>
DIRECTOR, THIS IS BLACK WIDOW.
FURY, GO AHEAD.
PACKAGE IS SECURE. REQUEST CAPTURE TEAM.
ROMANOFF. OF COURSE.
TELL ME, NATASHA... WHERE IS MY BLACK WIDOW?

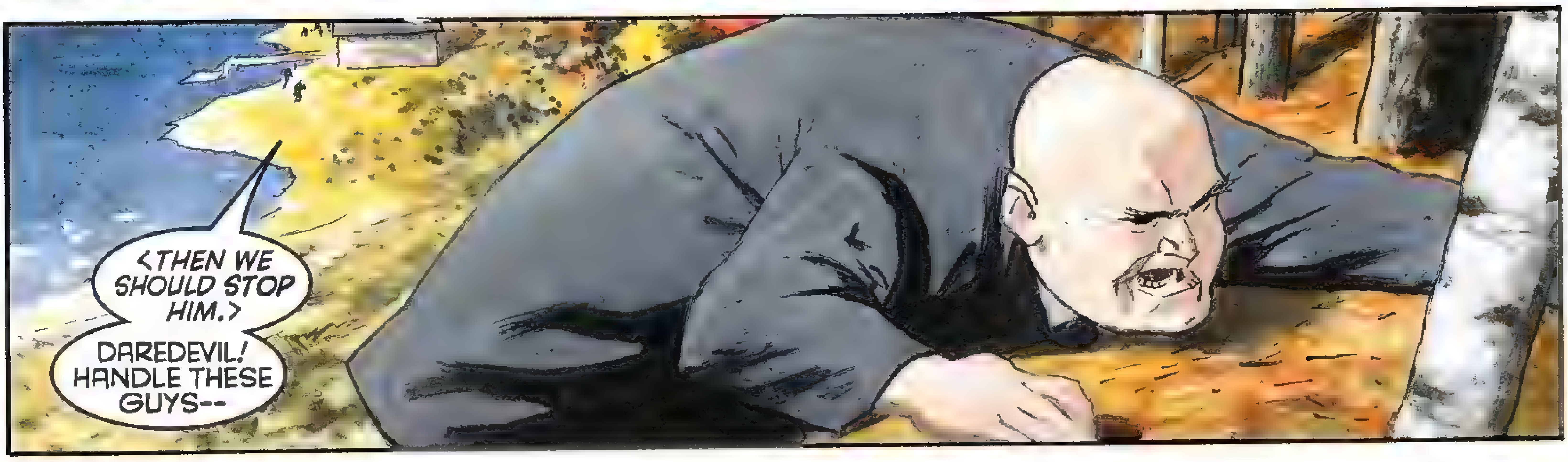
ALIVE. *SAFE.* SAFER WITH *ME* THAN SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN WITH *YOU.*
PROBABLY *TRUE.*
SHE'S TOO *NAIVE* TO HAVE *SURVIVED*, YOU *KNOW* THAT. A *CHILD* PLAYING AN *ADULT'S* GAME...
...EASILY *TRICKED*, AND FAR TOO *TRUSTING*...
...I'D HAVE *USED* HER, PLAYING ON HER *PATRIOTISM*, HER *PATHETIC* LOVE OF *MOTHER RUSSIA*...
...EVEN IF SHE *HAD* TAKEN THE *MONEY* I'D HAVE OFFERED HER, I'D HAVE *KILLED* HER IN THE END.
YOU WOULD HAVE MADE HER BOTH A *TRAITOR* AND A *CORPSE?*
SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN A *LIABILITY*...
ZHABA...
I'LL KILL YOU!

<KILL THEM NOW!>
WHERE IS HE, I'LL KILL HIM--
WATCH YOUR BACK!


FURY FINALLY DECIDED TO *SHOW.*
SENSE OF THE DRAMATIC--




<THAT *PIG* IS GETTING *AWAY!*>


<THEN WE SHOULD *STOP* HIM.>
DAREDEVIL! HANDLE THESE GUYS--

"--WE'LL GET STELYENKO."
ATTENTION! YOU ARE UNDER ARREST!
BY AUTHORITY OF S.H.I.E.L.D., YOU ARE ORDERED TO DROP YOUR WEAPONS...
... AND SURRENDER! THIS IS YOUR ONLY WARNING!
<LEAVING, GENERAL?>

<AND WITHOUT EVEN A KISS GOODBYE?>
<NO? THEN HOW ABOUT A BITE INSTEAD?>
AAH!
<HE'LL LIVE. WE SHOULD HAND HIM OVER TO FURY-->

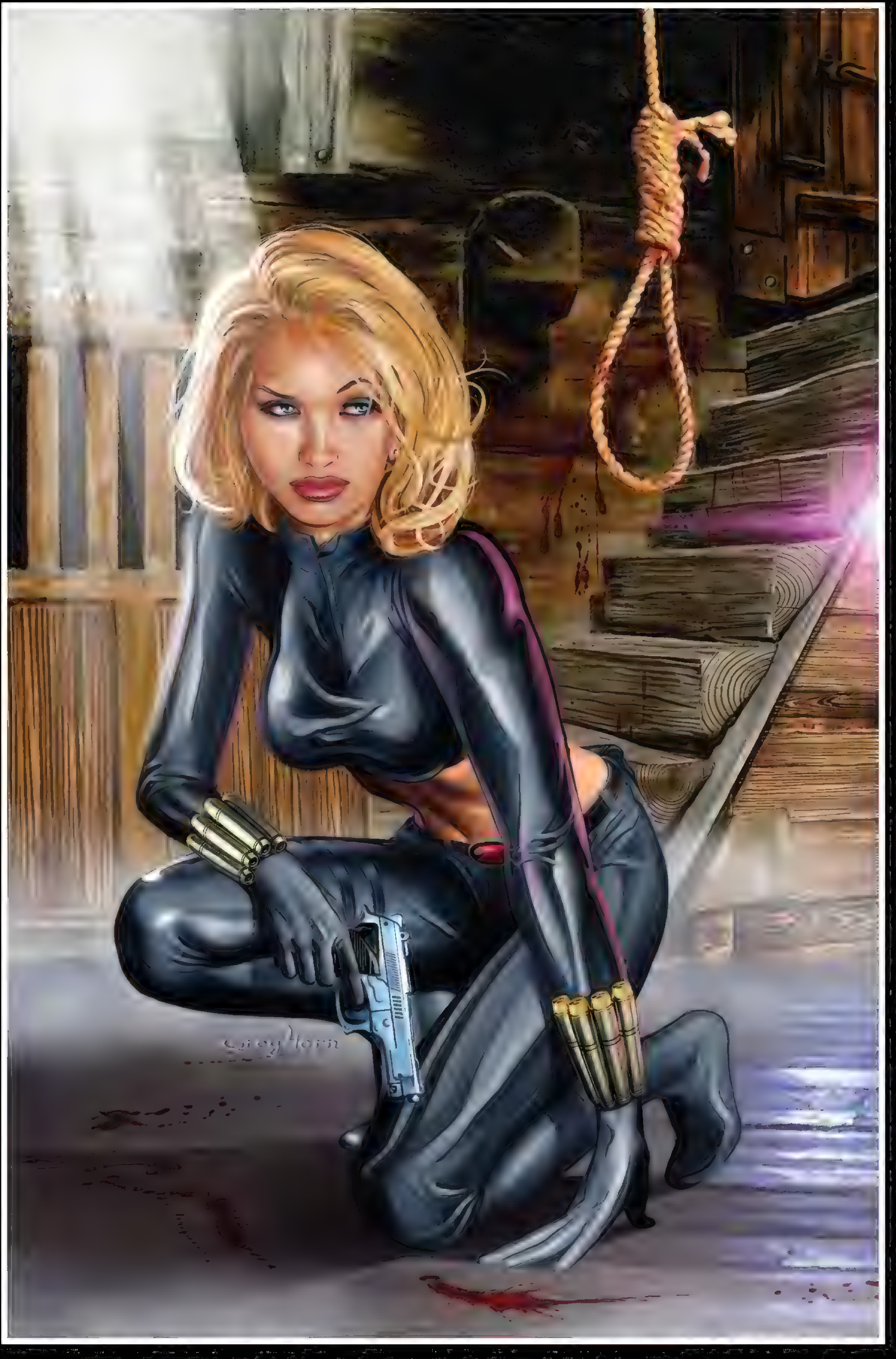
<WE... HAD TO KNOW WHAT STELYENKO WAS DOING, YELENA.>
<WE HAD TO STOP HIM.>
<THERE WERE OTHER WAYS!>
< YES, THERE WERE, BUT... >
<... I WANTED YOU TO UNDERSTAND, FINALLY, WHAT IT MEANT TO BE A SPY.>
<WE ARE NOT LIKE DAREDEVIL OR THE OTHERS, YELENA. WE ARE NOT HEROES.>
<WE ARE TOOLS.>
<AND TOOLS GET USED.>
<I HAD TO MAKE YOU SEE THAT.>
<IT WAS NOT CRUELTY FOR CRUELTY'S SAKE.>
<TELL ME, NATASHA...>

<...IF I PULL THE TRIGGER...>
<...WILL I KILL ME TOO?>

Over New York City,
S.H.I.E.L.D. R&D Lab 08.
1942 Hours, Local.
I *STILL* DON'T UNDERSTAND...
...IT ALL SEEMS LIKE *SADISM* TO ME. SHE DIDN'T HAVE TO *USE* YELENA TO GET *STELYENKO.*
NO.
THEN *WHY?*
THIS WAS *NEVER* ABOUT *STELYENKO*, OR THE *BOMBS.*
THIS WAS NATASHA TRYING TO SAVE YELENA.

THING OF IT IS, DAREDEVIL, BLONDIE DOWN THERE SEES THINGS LIKE YOU DO...
... SHE THINKS SHE'S A SUPER HERO...
... BUT NATASHA, SHE'S THE BLACK WIDOW. SHE'S THE REAL DEAL.
SHE KNOWS BETTER.
SHE KNOWS ESPIONAGE IS NASTY BUSINESS.
SO WHAT HAPPENS NOW?
NATASHA GETS A WEEK OFF...

"... AND YELENA GOES BACK TO *MOSCOW*, BACK TO THE *RED ROOM*.
"MAYBE NOW SHE KNOWS IT'S *NOT* A *GAME*.
"MAYBE SHE'S *GROWN UP*."
<YELENA, IT'S YOUR **MOTHER**. WHERE HAVE YOU **BEEN?** WE'VE BEEN **WORRIED** ABOUT YOU...>
<... WHY HAVEN'T YOU CALLED YOUR **AUNT OLGA?** SHE SAYS **DMITRI** IS **DYING** TO MEET A **GIRL** LIKE **YOU**...>
<... HE SAYS YOU SOUND LIKE THE **WOMAN** HE'S BEEN LOOKING FOR.>
DASVEEDÁNEEYA!



PALE LITTLE SPIDER 1

Moscow, Near Staroprivoskiy Prospekt
...DID SHE GIVE YOU A *REASON?*
SHE GAVE ME *SEVERAL.*
SHE TOLD ME THAT IF I *REALLY* LOVED HER, I'D BRING HER SOME BLACK-MARKET *LEVIS.*
AND WHY DIDN'T YOU?
I CAN'T *AFFORD* THEM, YOU KNOW THAT.
YOU COULD *TAKE* A PAIR FROM *EVIDENCE* CONTROL, NO ONE WOULD *KNOW.*
THAT WOULD BE *ILLEGAL,* VAL.
OF COURSE.
YOU REALIZE *THAT'S* WHY SHE LEFT YOU, MAKS.
WHY? BECAUSE I'M *HONEST?*
BECAUSE YOU'RE AN *IDIOT.*
MOTHER'S *WORSE* NOW THAN UNDER THE *COMMUNISTS,* BUT *YOU,* YOU'RE AN *HONEST* COP.
WHERE IS THIS *BODY* SUPPOSED TO BE, ANYWAY?
HERE.

BLACK WIDOW
PALE LITTLE SPIDER
PART THE FIRST
THERE'S SOMETHING YOU DON'T SEE EVERY DAY.
SHUT UP, VAL.
WE KNOW WHO CALLED IT IN?
ONE OF THE CONCERNED PERVERTS UPSTAIRS, I'D GUESS.
YOU COULD GO BACK UPSTAIRS AND ASK.
I WILL, LATER.
GREG RUCKA script
IGOR KORDEY art
CHRIS CHUCKRY colors
STARKINGS/COMICRAFT'S JASON letters
STUART MOORE editor
KELLY LAMY associate managing editor
NANCI DAKESIAN managing editor
JOE QUESADA chief
BILL JEMAS president

HOW LONG?
NO IDEA. THERE'S LIVIDITY, BUT THE POSE COULD BE RESPONSIBLE. WE'LL NEED THE CORONER.
DO WE KNOW THAT THIS IS MURDER...
...NOT JUST SOME FUN AND GAMES THAT GOT OUT OF HAND?
IT'S MURDER.

VAL?
YOU FIND SOMETHING?
I HOPE THIS WASN'T HIS.
YOU READ THE INSIGNIA?
SUB-COLONEL.
BIG BRASS.
NOT JUST A SUB-COLONEL...
...SUB-COLONEL IN INTELLIGENCE.
YOU BETTER MAKE THE CALL.
AND STOP LOOKING SO DISTRAUGHT, MAKS...

"...THIS JUST BECAME SOMEONE ELSE'S PROBLEM."
Glavnoye Razvedyvatelnoye Upravlenie Headquarters -- "The Aquarium" -- outside Moscow
YELENA?
YELENA, WHERE ARE YOU?
LEAVE ME ALONE, LIKA.
YOU'RE OVER-REACTING, YELENA. HOW LONG ARE YOU PLANNING TO STAY IN THERE?
UNTIL I PASS OUT.
THE STRESS-POSITION EXAM IS ALWAYS HARD. YOU SCORED BRILLIANTLY --
ROMANOV SCORED BETTER.
YOU SHOULD STOP COMPARING YOURSELF TO HER.
SHE SCORED BETTER, LIKA.
SHE WAS ALSO FOUR YEARS YOUNGER THAN YOU WHEN SHE TOOK THE EXAM.
YOU ARE THE ONLY PERSON WHO THINKS YOU FAILED.
EVERYONE ELSE THINKS YOU ARE THE BLACK WIDOW.
NOW GET SHOWERED AND GET DRESSED. THE FIRST DEPUTY DIRECTOR WANTS YOU IN THE RED ROOM...

REPORTING AS ORDERED, GENERAL.
YOU AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL STARKOVSKY SPEND QUITE A LOT OF TIME TOGETHER, DON'T YOU, CAPTAIN BELOVA?
I...
I SUPPOSE, GENERAL. HE IS ONE OF MY INSTRUCTORS.
YES. HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT... IMPROVISED WEAPONS... KNIFE WORK...
ALL VERY PHYSICAL.
TELL ME, CAPTAIN, ARE YOU AND THE COLONEL CLOSE?
CLOSE?
INTIMATE.
HE IS LIKE A FATHER TO ME.
AND HE HAS TRAINED YOU SINCE YOU STARTED IN THE PROGRAM?
YES, SIR.
SINCE YOU WERE FIFTEEN.
YES, SIR.
IF YOU WILL FORGIVE ME, SIR.
WHY ARE YOU ASKING ME FOR ANSWERS YOU ALREADY KNOW?

LIEUTENANT COLONEL STARKOVSKY IS **DEAD.**
SOMEONE **SHOT** HIM IN THE **BRAIN** AT **POINT-BLANK.**
MOSCOW **POLICE** DISCOVERED HIS **BODY** AT A **SEX CLUB** OFF STAROPRIVOSKIY PROSPEKT EARLY THIS MORNING.
...**NO,** NO **THAT** IS **NOT** POSSIBLE...
APPARENTLY, IT WAS A **CLUB** HE **FREQUENTED.**
THAT **CANNOT** BE **RIGHT...**
THE **DETECTIVES** CONDUCTED **INTERVIEWS** WITH **STAFF** AND **PATRONS.**
THEY **CONFIRMED** THAT THE LIEUTENANT COLONEL WAS A **REGULAR.**
...WHO?...
...**WHO** DID **THIS** TO HIM?
I WILL **KILL** WHO DID **THIS** TO HIM.
NO DOUBT.
THERE IS **MORE,** CAPTAIN BELOVA...

...WHEN STARKOVSKY'S **OFFICE** WAS **SEARCHED** THIS MORNING BY AGENTS OF THE SECOND DIVISION...
...THEY FOUND **SEVERAL** FILES **MISSING.**
TOP SECRET FILES.
YOUR FILES.
WHAT?
THEY WERE **YOUR** PERSONNEL FILES, CAPTAIN BELOVA.
WE HAVE **ELECTRONIC** COPIES, OF **COURSE,** BUT THE FACT REMAINS...
...COLONEL STARKOVSKY WAS EITHER **SELLING** OR **GIVING AWAY** INFORMATION ABOUT THE BLACK WIDOW.
THE LIEUTENANT COLONEL WAS **NO** TRAITOR, SIR.
YOU SOUND **VERY** CERTAIN...
...ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING THAT YOU HAD **NO** IDEA HOW HE WAS SPENDING HIS **NIGHTS.**
I AM HEREBY **ACTIVATING** YOU AS **BLACK WIDOW** FOR THE **PURPOSE** OF **INVESTIGATING** THE DEATH OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL STARKOVSKY.
RECOVER THE MISSING **FILES.**
BUT **MOST OF ALL,** CAPTAIN...

"...LEARN HIS SECRETS..."
Petrowka, Moscow Criminal Investigation Division Headquarters
...ABOUT THE MARKS ON HIS WRISTS?
LIGATURE MARKS, CERTAINLY. THEY'RE ALSO AROUND HIS ANKLES...
...FROM THE SEEPAGE, ALMOST CERTAINLY ADMINISTERED PRIOR TO DEATH.
WAS HE HOG-TIED?
THAT IS ONE POSSIBILITY.
IT MAY NOT MEAN ANYTHING, MAKS. THOSE PEOPLE ARE TYING EACH OTHER UP ALL THE TIME.
NOT LIKE THIS.
IS THAT THE VOICE OF EXPERIENCE I'M HEARING?
BETTER THAN THE VOICE... OF...
...IGNORANCE...
CAN I HELP YOU LADIES?

WHICH OF YOU IS IN *CHARGE?*
THAT WOULD BE *ME.*
YOU? *YOU* ARE THE *SENIOR* DETECTIVE?
THIS IS *MY* CASE, THAT MEANS I'M IN *CHARGE.*
MAKSIM KESHIKOV GOLITSYN.
AND WHO THE *HELL* ARE YOU?
I AM CAPTAIN YELENA BELOVA, FIRST DIRECTORATE, *GRU.*
THIS IS MY *COLLEAGUE,* CAPTAIN ANZEHLIKA MEDVEDEV...
...AND SHE WILL BE CONDUCTING THE *REMAINDER* OF THIS *AUTOPSY.*
PARDON ME.
YOU WILL GIVE *ALL* YOUR FINDINGS TO *HER,* AND YOU WILL *ASSIST* HER *EXAM* IN ANY WAY SHE *REQUIRES.*
TELL ME WHAT YOU'VE *FOUND* SO *FAR.*
NOT *MUCH.* HE'D BEEN *BOUND* ARMS AND *LEGS...*

COME BACK HERE!
WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?
YOU JUST DON'T STRUT INTO MY MORGUE AND TELL ME YOU'RE HIJACKING MY INVESTIGATION!
I DON'T CARE WHAT DIRECTORATE YOU'RE FROM, THE GRU HAS NO AUTHORITY OVER THE POLICE --
HNNGG
FUCK YOU!!
YOU KNOW NOTHING!
YOU ARE NOTHING!
-- CAN'T -- BREATHE --
THAT MAN IS NOT SOME CORPSE, NOT JUST ANOTHER BODY!
THAT MAN WAS BETTER THAN YOU WILL EVER BE --
-- AND I WILL DO WHATEVER, AND I WILL GO WHEREVER TO SERVE HIS MEMORY!
NOTHING...
...NOTHING...

...DISGUSTING...
YOU MUST BE NEW...

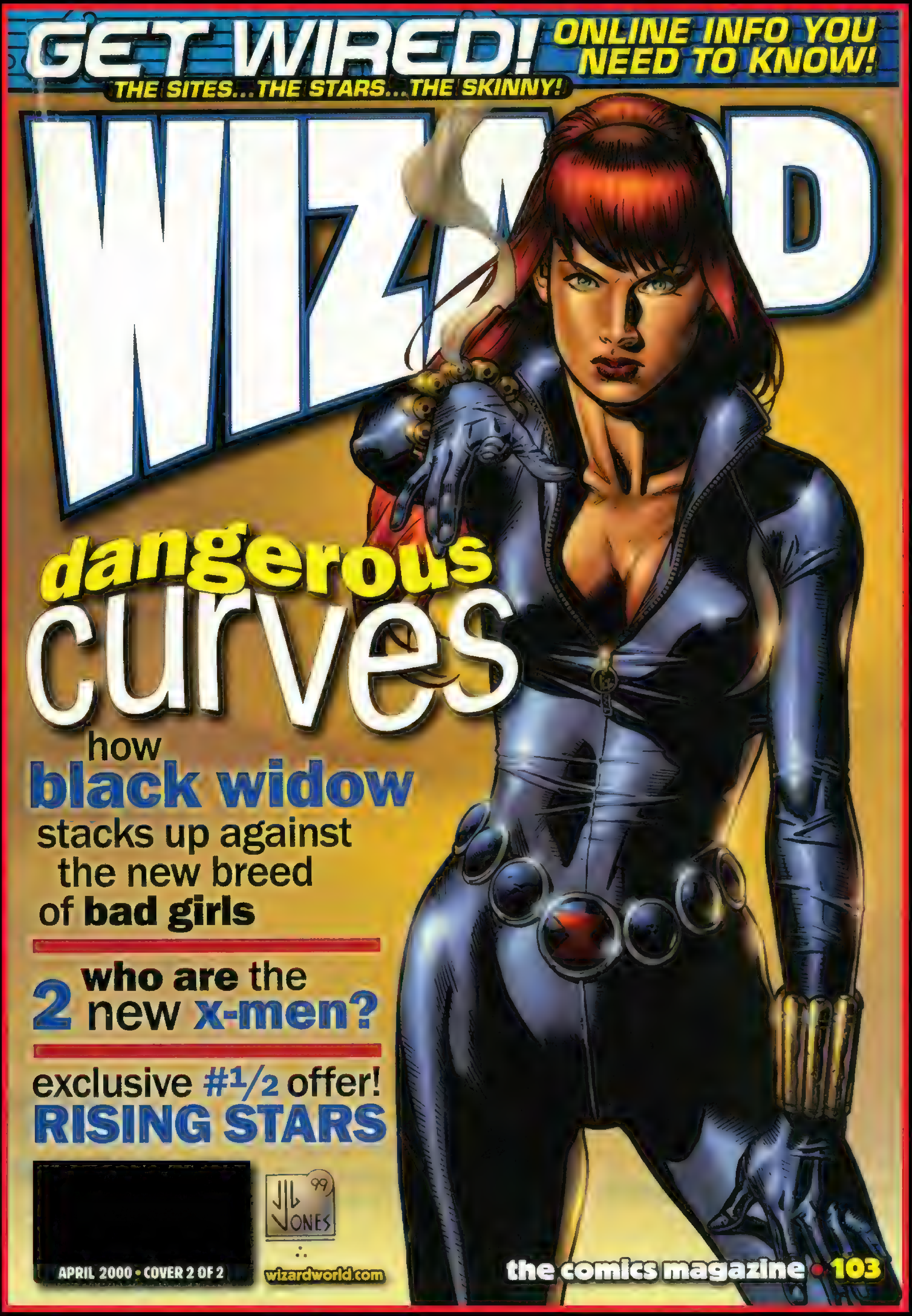
...ONLY A VIRGIN CAN MUSTER SUCH A CAUGHT-IN-THE HEADLIGHTS LOOK.
I'M NIKKI. YOU ARE?
...YELENA.
TOP OR BOTTOM, YELENA?
I --
SHH... LET ME GUESS...
LET'S SEE... COMES IN ALONE...
...HEAD HELD HIGH...
...MEETS MY EYES AND GIVES ME HER NAME...
...AND WEARING A VERY EXCITING ENSEMBLE --
YOU DON'T TOUCH ME, BITCH.
I DON'T? MAY I ASK WHO DOES?
STRUGGLING FOR THE TOP, BUT NOT THERE YET...

IS THERE SOMETHING YOU'RE LOOKING FOR IN PARTICULAR, PALE LITTLE SPIDER?
WHAT? WHY DO YOU CALL ME THAT? WHY "SPIDER"?
NO. THAT IS NOT HOW YOU ASK AT ALL, MY LITTLE SPIDER.
WAIT! DAMN YOU, ANSWER M --
AND YOU DON'T EVER TOUCH ME, SPIDER...
...NOT WITHOUT MY PERMISSION. YOU MAY TRY AGAIN.
TELL ME WHY --
DO I NEED TO HIT YOU AGAIN?
I WILL HIT YOU BACK.
YOU COULD. BUT YOU WILL NOT GET THE ANSWER YOU WANT IF YOU DO. NOW, SAY THE WORDS.
YOU WANT TO SAY THEM, I CAN SEE IT...
...JUST LET THEM OUT...
...PLEASE... TELL ME... WHY DID YOU CALL ME LITTLE SPIDER?
BARELY ACCEPTABLE.
BUT I WILL INDULGE YOU, SINCE YOU ARE NEW.
FOLLOW ME.

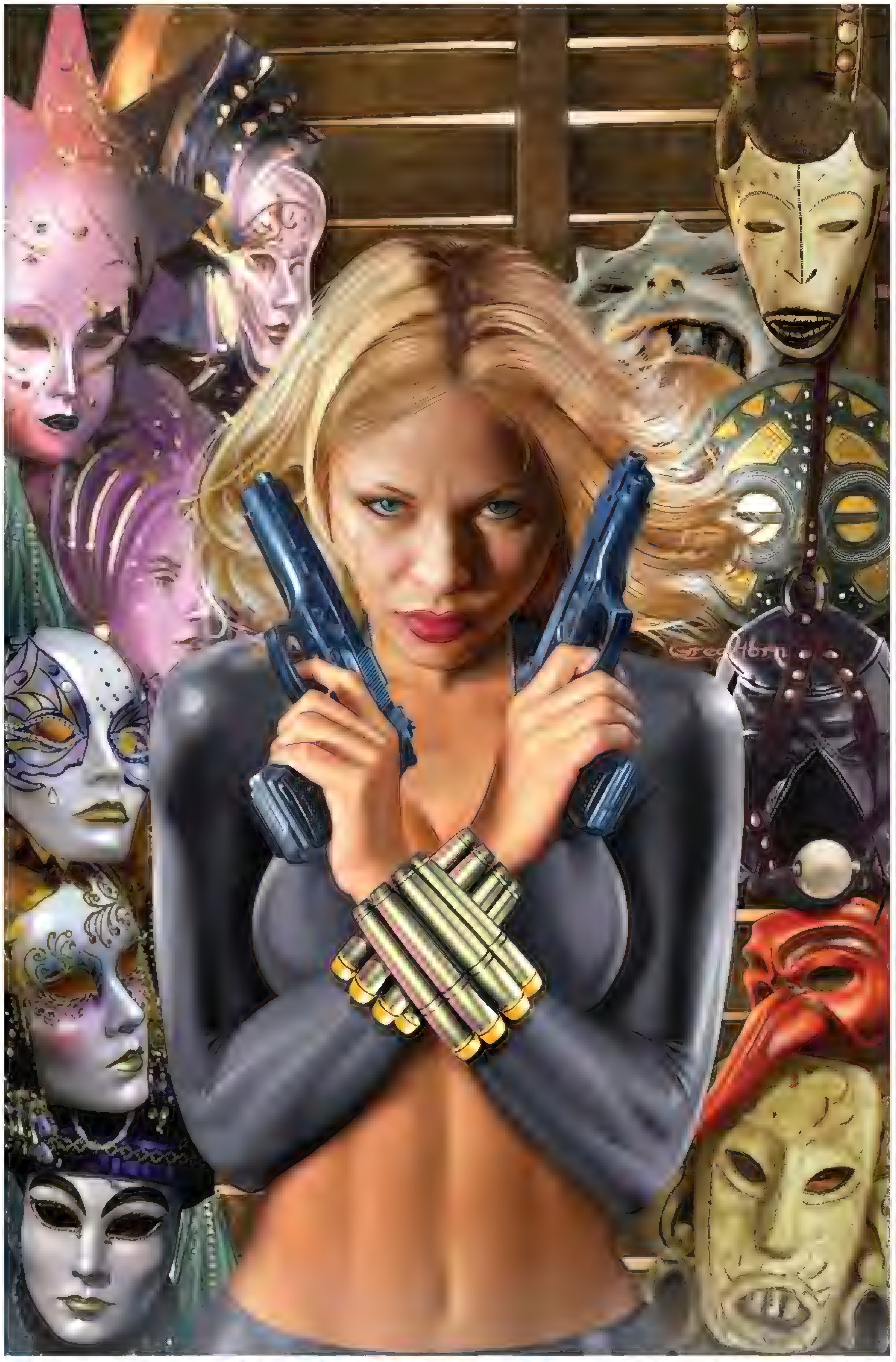
AHEM.
IT'S IMPOLITE TO STARE...
...UNLESS ONE HAS PERMISSION, OF COURSE.
ENOUGH OF THIS. I'VE NO INTEREST IN PLAYING YOUR GAMES --
DON'T LIE...
...IT'S UNBECOMING.

THE NEED DRIPS OFF YOU LIKE OIL.
WHETHER YOU ADMIT IT OR NOT, YOU'RE VERY INTERESTED IN THIS GAME.
YOU'VE NEVER FELT QUITE LIKE THIS BEFORE, HAVE YOU, LITTLE PALE SPIDER...?
...SO FURIOUS...
...SO ASHAMED...
...SO AROUSED...
OOOH, SOMEBODY WANTS A SPANKING.
I WILL KILL YOU IF YOU DO NOT OPEN THAT DOOR.
BUT IT'S NOT EVEN LOCKED, LITTLE SPIDER.
OPEN IT YOURSELF...
...AND TELL ME IF YOU LIKE WHAT YOU SEE...

...BLACK WIDOW...


GET WIRED!
ONLINE INFO YOU NEED TO KNOW!
THE SITES...THE STARS...THE SKINNY!
WIZARD
dangerous curves
how black widow stacks up against the new breed of bad girls
2 who are the new x-men?
exclusive #1/2 offer! RISING STARS
APRIL 2000 • COVER 2 OF 2
JG JONES 99
wizardworld.com
the comics magazine • 103

J.G. JONES & HABERLIN STUDIOS
Wizard #103



PALE LITTLE SPIDER **2**

Фабрика
Moscow, near Staroprivoskiy Prospekt
DISPATCH EIGHT ELEVEN, CENTRAL. DETECTIVE GOLITSYN? DETECTIVE GOLITSYN, PLEASE RESPOND.
GOLITSYN, GO AHEAD.
I HAVE DETECTIVE DOBROVA ON PATCH.
PUT HER THROUGH.
MAKS?
VAL.
WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU? WHY AREN'T YOU HOME?
FABRIKA. THOUGHT I'D SWING THROUGH AGAIN, SEE IF I DUG UP ANYTHING NEW.
MUST BE THE LINE...
...I THOUGHT I HEARD YOU SAY YOU'RE AT "FABRIKA."
THAT IS WHAT I SAID, VAL.

MAKS... MAKS, DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE KEEPING ON THIS.
ALL RIGHT.
I WON'T TELL YOU I'M KEEPING ON THIS.
IT'S NOT YOUR CASE!
IT IS MY CASE, ACTUALLY.
NOT ANYMORE! IT'S THE G.R.U.'S NOW, AND YOU DON'T FUCK WITH THE G.R.U.!
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GETTING INTO, HERE. THAT WOMAN, THE ONE WHO KICKED YOU...
...DO YOU KNOW WHO SHE IS?
BELOVA SOMETHING, SHE'S A CAPTAIN --
YES, THAT'S HER RANK, BUT THAT'S NOT WHO SHE IS...
...MAKS, LISTEN TO ME. CAPTAIN YELENA BELOVA IS TASKED DIRECTLY FROM THE RED ROOM, YOU UNDERSTAND?

SO SHE'S A **SPOOK.**
THAT'S THE G.R.U., VAL, **SPOOKS** AND **THUGS.**
LISTEN TO ME NOW. I **KNOW A GUY,** MAKS...
... HE WAS WITH G.R.U. THIRD DIRECTORATE UNTIL A COUPLE **MONTHS** AGO, WORKING FOR ONE OF THE NEW SOFTWARE COMPANIES NOW.
...AND HE TELLS ME THAT YELENA BELOVA ISN'T JUST **ANY** SPOOK...
...SHE'S THE **BLACK WIDOW,** MAKS.
MAKS... MAKS, ARE YOU **LISTENING?**
THAT'S NOT **POSSIBLE.**
THAT'S **NOT** POSSIBLE, VAL.
THERE **IS** NO BLACK WIDOW. IT WAS **COLD WAR** FANTASY, **PROPAGANDA.**
SHE DOESN'T **EXIST...**
MAKS...
Фабрика
...WHAT IF SHE DOES?

DID WE GET IT *RIGHT?*
THE *COLONEL* DEEMED IT *ADEQUATE...*
...BUT WE WERE ALWAYS TRYING TO *IMPROVE* THE *DETAILS.*
WHO THE *HELL* IS *THIS,* NIKKI? WHY ARE YOU *INTERRUPTING* MY *SESSION?*
NO NO NO, TITS. YOU MAY HAVE THE *COSTUME,* BUT THERE'S ONLY ONE *DOM* IN THIS *SCENE...*
...AND IT'S NOT --
COLONEL...?

COLONEL STARKOVSKY, IT'S ALL RIGHT, I'M HERE --
-- I'M HERE...
YOU... YOU'RE A BLACK WIDOW, TOO?
MISTRESS WIDOW...
...PLEASE, MISTRESS, I'M SO CLOSE NOW...
...PLEASE FINISH ME I CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER...
...I'LL DO ANYTHING --
HUSH, NOW, OF COURSE YOU WILL...
...NOW JUST GO AND FIND PETRA, SHE'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU...
...GOD, AH, OH GOD...

BLACK WIDOW

PALE LITTLE SPIDER

PART THE SECOND

GREG RUCKA script
IGOR KORDEY art
CHRIS CHUCKRY colors
STARKINGS/COMICRAFT'S JASON letters
STUART MOORE editor
KELLY LAMY associate managing editor
NANCI DAKESIAN managing editor
JOE QUESADA chief
BILL JEMAS president

WHAT... WHAT *IS* THIS...?
WHAT IS GOING ON *HERE?*
YOU'RE *PATHETIC.*
TRULY. STANDING THERE *WHIMPERING* AND *MEWLING.*
FEIGNING THIS HOLLOW *STRENGTH,* PRETENDING YOU ARE SO *TOUGH...*
...ALL THE WHILE DESPERATE TO *HIDE* YOUR *WEAKNESS.*
I CAN'T *IMAGINE* WHAT IT WAS THAT COLONEL STARKOVSKY *SAW* IN YOU.
I *REALLY* CAN'T.

PLEASE... I DON'T... I JUST WANT ANSWERS.
WHAT IS THIS ABOUT? HOW DID YOU KNOW THE COLONEL?
DO YOU ALWAYS ASK SUCH STUPID QUESTIONS, SPIDER? I MEAN, TRULY?
ARE YOU REALLY SO NAÏVE YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'VE SEEN HERE?
ARE YOU REALLY SO WORTHLESS?
STOP INSULTING ME --
SHUT YOUR FUCKING MOUTH, SPIDER!
DON'T --
SHUT UP! I SAID SHUT UP!
YOU SPEAK WITH MY PERMISSION! YOU MOVE WITH MY PERMISSION!
AND I HAVE NOT GIVEN IT TO YOU...
...YOU WORTHLESS FUCKING WHORE, YOU DISGRACE YOUR COUNTRY --
STOP IT...
-- YOU FAIL YOUR INSTRUCTORS, YOU DISHONOR YOUR UNIFORM --
-- JUST LOOKING AT YOU MAKES ME SICK --
I SAID --

-- STOP IT!
MAKE ME.
WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH YOU?
YOU THINK THIS IS PLAYING? THIS IS A GAME?
A MAN WAS MURDERED HERE! A GOOD MAN!
A MAN I LOVED AND YOU MOCK ME!

DAMN YOU! ANSWER ME!
DO YOU WANT ME TO HURT YOU? IS THAT IT? YOU WANT ME TO BEAT YOU UNTIL YOU CLIMAX?
THAT'S NOT THE QUESTION.
THE QUESTION IS, DO YOU?
NO! GOD! WHY DO YOU EVEN ASK?
MAYBE IT'S YOUR KINK, THAT'S WHY.
STARKOVSKY ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU WERE A LESBIAN...
...SO I THOUGHT I SHOULD ASK.
NO I'M NOT A LESBIAN, I'M NOT...
...ANYTHING...

YOU POOR THING.
DON'T *START* AGAIN.
NO, NO I'M *NOT.*
YOU DIDN'T DO IT, DID YOU?
YOU COULDN'T HAVE. YOU LOVED HIM TOO MUCH.
WHAT?
WAIT, YOU *THINK* -- BUT...
YOU THINK I KILLED HIM. I THOUGHT *YOU* KILLED HIM.
WE'RE *BOTH* WRONG, LITTLE SPIDER.
ASK YOUR *QUESTIONS,* LITTLE SPIDER...
...I'LL ANSWER WHAT I CAN.

ALL OF THIS... THIS ROOM, THE... FAKE ME...
...IT WAS ALL FOR THE COLONEL?
WHO ELSE WOULD HAVE WANTED IT?
YOU ARE THE BLACK WIDOW, YES?
YES.
I THOUGHT SO, BUT I WASN'T SURE.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU THINK WE DO HERE.
YOU'VE MADE YOUR DISAPPROVAL CLEAR ENOUGH.
YOU THINK WE'RE PERVERTS, MAYBE?
BUT NOTHING HAPPENS UNLESS THE CLIENT WANTS IT TO, YOU UNDERSTAND?
WE'RE HERE FOR THEIR FANTASIES, NOT OUR OWN.
AND COLONEL STARKOVSKY'S FANTASY?
IT WAS TO BE WHIPPED AND BEATEN IN THE RED ROOM?
YES AND NO...
...HIS FANTASY WAS YOU, BLACK WIDOW.

GOOD EVENING.
HOW CAN I *HELP* YOU...
...DO I *KNOW* YOU?
I WAS HERE LAST *NIGHT*...
...MOSCOW C.I.D.
YES. YES, I REMEMBER.
WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
I NEED TO TAKE A LOOK AROUND.
FOR *KICKS?*
FOR *WORK.*
YOU CAN'T JUST *GO* IN THERE, NOT LIKE *THAT.*
I'M NOT HERE FOR A *FREEBIE.* I'M LOOKING FOR SOMEONE.
WE HAVE *CLIENTS* HERE...

...SOME OF THEM *IMPORTANT* CLIENTS.
SOME FROM THE *GOVERNMENT.*
I'LL BE *POLITE.*
YOU DON'T *UNDERSTAND* --
NO...
...I THINK I *DO.*
WHAT *YOU* DON'T UNDERSTAND IS THAT I AM *PURSUING* AN *INVESTIGATION,* AND I NEED ACCESS TO THE *PREMISES.*
NOW EITHER YOU *LET* ME THROUGH, OR I CALL *FORTY* OFFICERS AND WE *CLOSE* YOU DOWN.
AND YOUR *CLIENTS* WON'T *LIKE* THAT...
...ESPECIALLY THE ONES IN THE *GOVERNMENT.*
THANK YOU. I'LL TRY NOT TO *STARE.*

...WAITING TO PROVE THEIR WORTH THROUGH SERVICE TO THE LUCKY BIDDER...
...AGAIN, DO IT RIGHT...
...YES MASTER SORRY MASTER...
...BE RIDICULOUS, AFTER THAT THING IN CHECHNYA, HE WOULDN'T DARE!
THERE WILL HAVE TO BE SOME SORT OF RESPONSE, OF COURSE...
NO NO NO OOOHHH
MMNNHHHNNNN
GOOD THAT'S GOOD...
BEG YOUR PARDON.
-- PIECES OF SHIT! NOW BEG AND BEG RIGHT...
HEY. YOU WANT SOME?
UH... NO, NO THANK YOU...
NNUUUOHGODUHHHHH
HHHDONTSTOPUHHHOHHH

...HE WAS LIKE MY *FATHER*, YOU UNDERSTAND?
OF *COURSE* I DO. THAT'S *WHY* HE CAME TO *ME*. HE WAS *AFRAID*, NOT JUST OF WHAT HE *FELT*, BUT OF WHAT YOU WOULD DO IF YOU EVER FOUND *OUT*.
I DON'T *UNDERSTAND*.
ANOTHER THING I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
HOW MANY *YEARS* DID HE TRAIN YOU, YELENA? TEN? TWELVE?
FOUR, FIVE, SIX DAYS A WEEK? HAND-TO-HAND *COMBAT*, TEACHING YOU TO *FIGHT*...
...ALL THOSE YEARS WORKING WITH YOU, *BODY-TO-BODY*, WATCHING YOU GET *STRONGER* AND *BETTER* AND *FASTER*...
...UNTIL *THE* DAY WHERE YOU COULD *BEAT* EVEN HIM.
ALL OF HIS AFFECTION FOR YOU, ALL OF HIS PRIDE IN HIS *STUDENT*. THE REGIMENTED LIFE YOU SHARED.
AND ONE DAY HE FINDS HE IS GETTING MORE AND MORE *AROUSED* WHILE YOU *SPAR*. HE FINDS HIMSELF FANTASIZING ABOUT YOU.
BUT... TO DO *THIS?*
YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND HOW *IMPORTANT* YOU WERE TO HIM. NOR DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE *STRENGTH* OF HIS *DESIRE*.
WHAT ELSE COULD HE *DO?* MASTURBATE EVERY NIGHT AND *HOPE* FOR THE DAY YOU WOULD GIVE HIM WHAT HE DREAMED OF?
IT BECAME AN *OBSESSION* FOR HIM, HE WAS *ASHAMED*, AND EVEN *SO* HE HAD TO *ADDRESS* IT.
SO HE CAME TO *ME*, AND HE GAVE ME *MONEY* AND HE SHOWED ME *FILES*. HE KNEW WHAT HE NEEDED. HE ASKED ME TO *PROVIDE* IT.
SO I GAVE HIM *YOU*.
A YOU WHO WOULD *BEAT* HIM AND *PUNISH* HIM...

...AND THEN GIVE HIM *COMFORT* WHEN IT WAS *TIME*.
DESPITE THE *NATURE* OF THESE GAMES, NO ONE IS EVER SUPPOSED TO GET *TRULY* HURT.
THE *WOMAN* WHO WAS IN HERE WHEN WE ARRIVED. SHE WAS THE ONE WHO WAS WITH HIM?
PETRA, YES. SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE *YOU*.
PETRA ENJOYED IT, SHE DID THE ACT FOR *OTHER* CLIENTS, AS YOU SAW.
NEVER WITH THE *SAME* DETAIL AS FOR THE COLONEL, OF COURSE.
BUT THE *COSTUME* AND THE *ATTITUDE*... THEY ARE QUITE *POPULAR*. I'M SURE YOU UNDERSTAND.
NOT REALLY, NO.
OH, COME NOW, CAPTAIN BELOVA! YOU ARE YOUNG AND VERY *PRETTY* AND YOU WEAR *TIGHT* BLACK *LEATHER*.
IF THAT IS *NOT* FETISH-GEAR, I DON'T KNOW WHAT *IS*.
PETRA.
TAKE ME TO SEE *HER*.

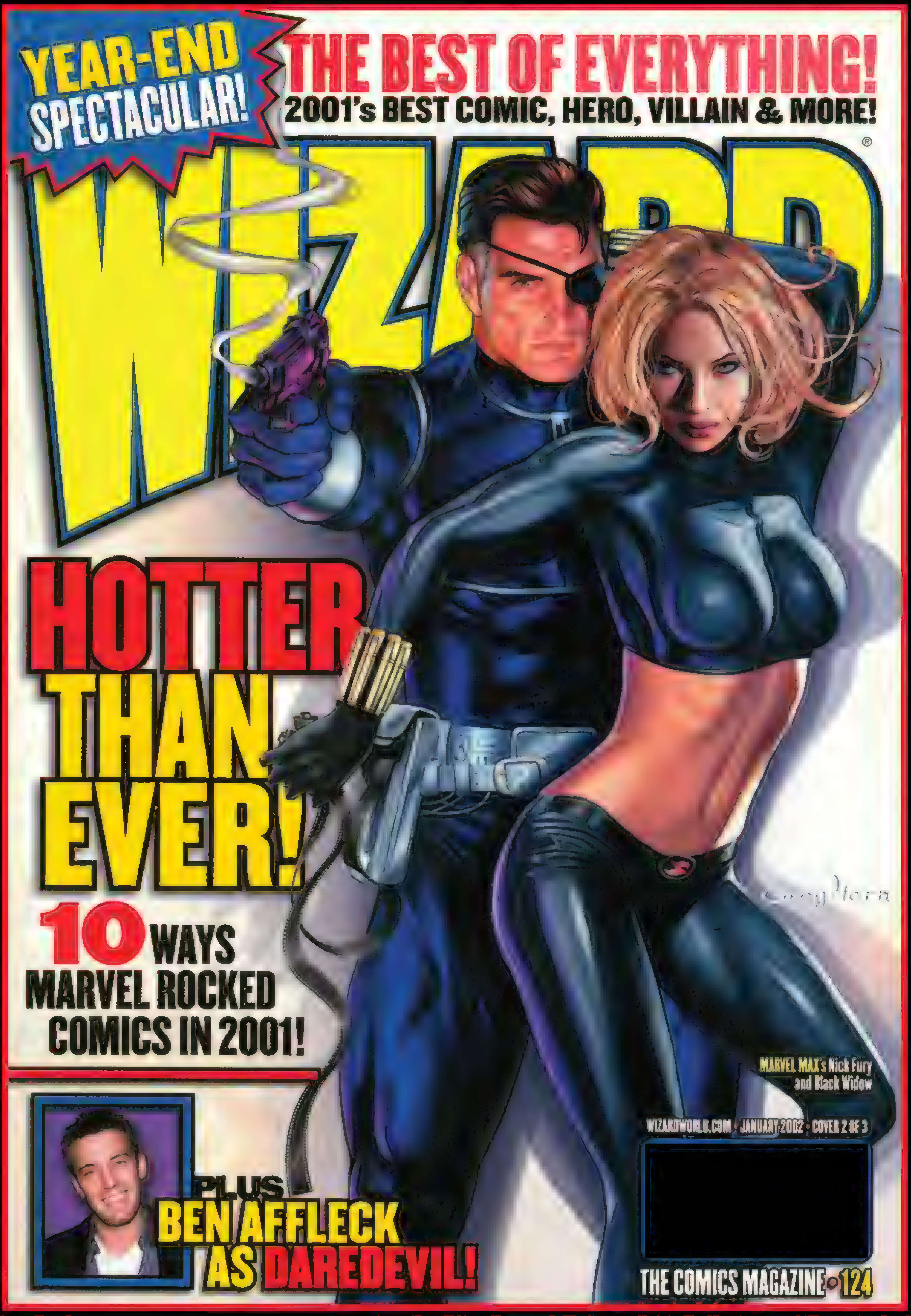
CAPTAIN BELOVA?
CAPTAIN?
HELLO?

HELLO?
WHY ARE YOU FOLLOWING ME? SHUT THE DOOR.
DETECTIVE GOLITSYN. YOU, UH... KICKED ME IN THE GUT EARLY TODAY.
DID I?
YEAH, BUT I'M WILLING TO OVERLOOK THAT BIT OF BRUTALITY. WE'RE BOTH INVESTIGATING THE SAME THING.
INVESTIGATING. STARKOVSKY.
WHAT I'M SAYING IS THAT WE SHOULD WORK TOGETHER.
NO.
THE BLACK WIDOW WORKS ALONE.
AH.
SO IT'S TRUE...
...YOU REALLY ARE THE BLACK WIDOW?
OH, YES...
I HAVE THE TRAINING AND THE UNIFORM. EVEN THE WIDOW'S BITE.
LET ME SHOW YOU...
I'M NOT SURE --
SHHH...

...DON'T SPEAK...
...WH... WHAT...

...GOD... PLEASE...
UMMMM YES THAT'S AHHH
THAT'S AHHHH IT NNHHHH
HNNN GOOOOOD

BETTER THAN *TRAINING*, HMM, DARLING?
THERE'S THAT *OTHER* ONE... THE ONE WHO THINKS SHE'S *ME* --
...DON'T THINK SHE KNOWS OUR *SECRET*...
...OUR *TOP SECRET*...
...HEH I *COULD* TELL YOU...
...BUT THEN I'D HAVE TO *KILL* YOU...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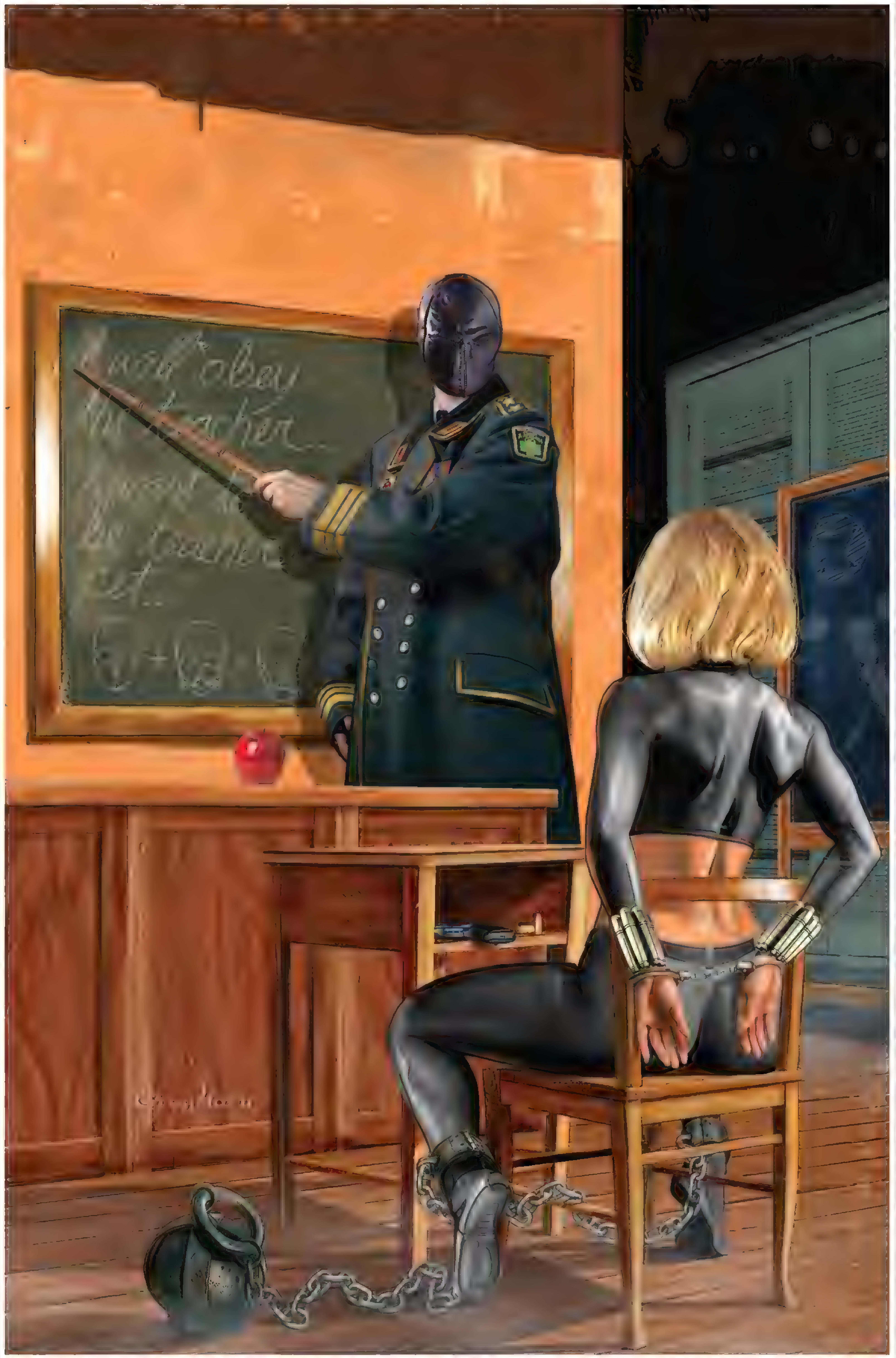
GREG HORN
Wizard #124


Don't obey
the teacher...
you'll
be punish
ed...

PALE LITTLE SPIDER **3**

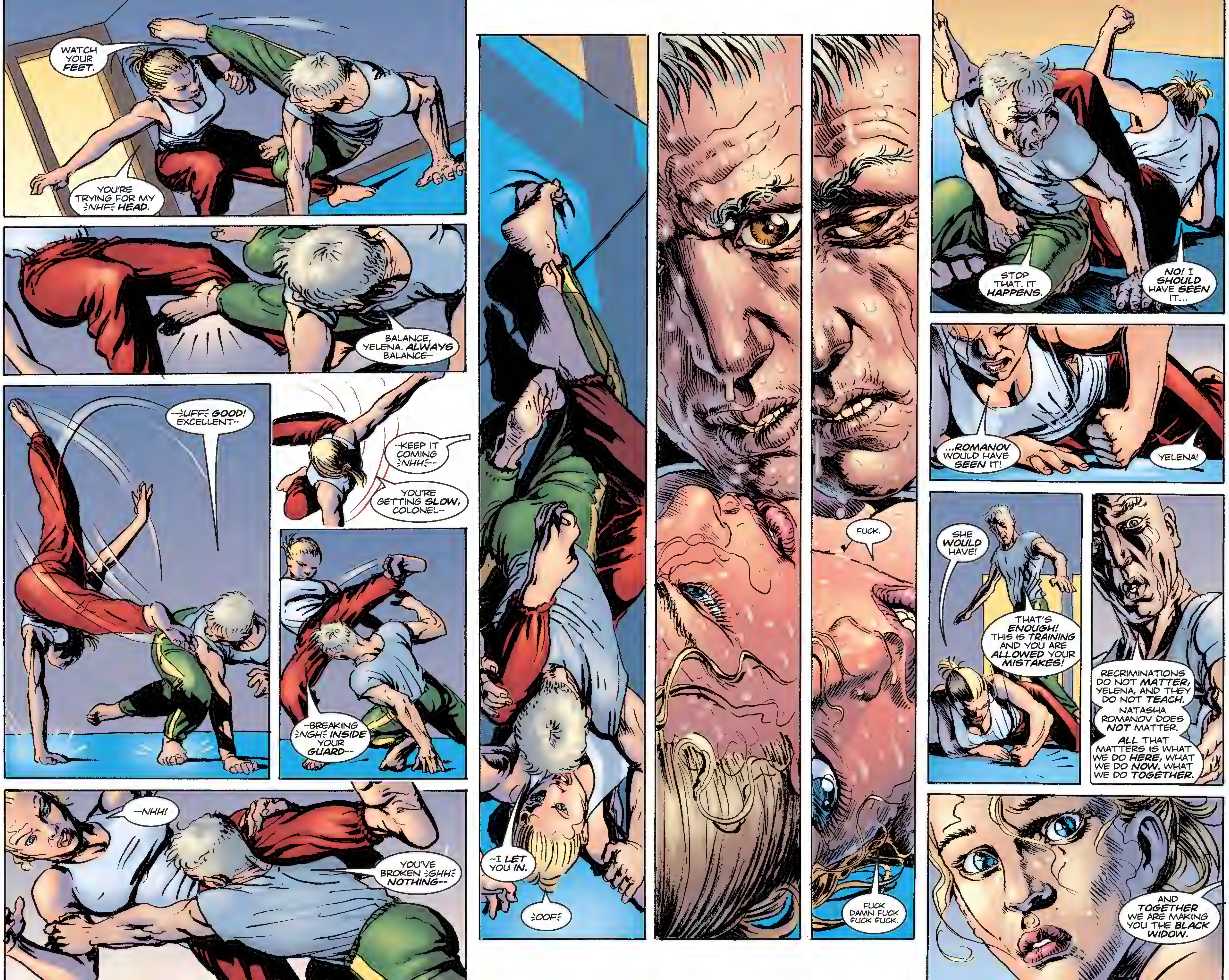
BLACK WIDOW

PALE LITTLE SPIDER

PART THE THIRD

GREG RUCKA script
IGOR KORDEY art
CHRIS CHUCKRY colors
STARKINGS/COMICRAFT'S ALBERT DI letters
STUART MOORE editor
KELLY LAMY associate managing editor
NANCI DAKESIAN managing editor
JOE QUESADA chief
BILL JEMAS president

"The Aquarium"-- Outside Moscow.
...DO THAT AGAIN AND I'LL HURT YOU.
I'M SORRY, COLONEL?
YOU HEARD ME, YELENA.
DO THAT AGAIN, I'LL HURT YOU.
YOU'LL TRY, OLD MAN.
OLD? THIS FROM A WET-BEHIND-THE-EARS GIRL --
--WITH NO RESPECT FOR HER BETTERS?
I BEG YOUR PARDON, COLONEL STARKOVSKY...
BUT IF YOU'RE BETTER YOU SHOULD PROVE IT.


WATCH YOUR FEET.
YOU'RE TRYING FOR MY ≷NHF≶ HEAD.
BALANCE, YELENA. ALWAYS BALANCE--
--≷UFF≶ GOOD! EXCELLENT--
--KEEP IT COMING ≷NHH≶--
YOU'RE GETTING SLOW, COLONEL--
--BREAKING ≷NGH≶ INSIDE YOUR GUARD--
--NHH!
YOU'VE BROKEN ≷GHH≶ NOTHING--
--I LET YOU IN.
≷OOF≶
FUCK.
FUCK DAMN FUCK FUCK FUCK.
STOP THAT. IT HAPPENS.
NO! I SHOULD HAVE SEEN IT...
...ROMANOV WOULD HAVE SEEN IT!
YELENA!
SHE WOULD HAVE!
THAT'S ENOUGH! THIS IS TRAINING AND YOU ARE ALLOWED YOUR MISTAKES!
RECRIMINATIONS DO NOT MATTER, YELENA, AND THEY DO NOT TEACH. NATASHA ROMANOV DOES NOT MATTER. ALL THAT MATTERS IS WHAT WE DO HERE, WHAT WE DO NOW. WHAT WE DO TOGETHER.
AND TOGETHER WE ARE MAKING YOU THE BLACK WIDOW.

...YELENA?
YES. SORRY.
YOU'RE ALL **RIGHT?**
JUST... **REMEMBERING.**
THE COLONEL?
COLONEL STARKOVSKY, YES.
PETRA'S ROOM IS THIS WAY, BUT I REALLY **DON'T** THINK SHE'LL BE OF **HELP.**
SHE WAS WITH THE COLONEL **LAST** NIGHT?
PRETENDING TO BE **ME?**
YES, BUT IT'S AS I **TOLD** YOU. IT WAS A **GAME...**

...PETRA WOULD NEVER DO ANYTHING TO COLONEL STARKOVSKY HE DID NOT WANT HER TO DO TO HIM, YOU UNDERSTAND?
SO YOU KEEP SAYING.
SHE LIVES HERE?
SHE RENTS A ROOM. WE HAVE HEAT HERE, YOU KNOW HOW MOSCOW IS.
THE COLONEL LIKED THAT SHE WAS HERE. IT MEANT SHE WAS AVAILABLE WHEN HE WANTED TO VISIT.
WHY DID HE PICK HER TO... TO PRETEND TO BE ME?
HE DIDN'T, HE LEFT THAT TO ME. IT WASN'T EASY, EITHER.
THE COLONEL NEEDED SOMEONE TO PASS AS YOU, SOMEONE WITH YOUR HEIGHT, YOUR BUILD.
PETRA IS A CLOSE MATCH. HAS THE SAME EYE COLOR, AND ONCE SHE DYED HER HAIR IT WAS EVEN BETTER.
SHE WAS IN THE ARMY, TOO. DISCHARGED, BUT IT GAVE HER THE MANNERISMS AND BEARING--
DID HE... DID HE SLEEP WITH HER?
I WANT TO KNOW, NIKKI.
IT'S PART OF WHAT HE WAS PAYING FOR, YELENA.
PETRA'S ROOM IS THIS WAY...

...VERY GOOD TONIGHT, I'M VERY HAPPY.
ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR REWARD?
IF IT PLEASE YOU, MASTER.
OH, YES, IT PLEASES ME GREATLY...
EXCUSE ME, SHE'S MY--
MASTER!
FUCK OFF.
MASTER? MASTER HEL--
STILL YOUR TONGUE OR I'LL TAKE IT FROM YOU!
MY MASTER...

HE WAS HERE EARLIER TONIGHT, MIGHT HAVE SEEN HIM?
LOT OF MEN HERE TONIGHT.
YOU WOULD REMEMBER THIS ONE.
HE'S A DETECTIVE, JUST LIKE ME...
...NAME IS GOLITSYN.
I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM.
YOU'RE LOOKING FOR DETECTIVE GOLITSYN?
I WAS JUST TALKING TO HIM. I'M PETRA.
DETECTIVE DOBROVA. IS HE HERE?
DOWNSTAIRS. HE WAS ASKING ME SOME QUESTIONS.
TAKE ME TO HIM.

IS IT ALWAYS SO DIM DOWN HERE?
SOME GAMES ARE BETTER IN THE DARK.
HE'S THROUGH HERE.
GAMES.
I'M NOT GOING TO CATCH HIM DOING SOMETHING EMBARRASSING, AM I?
OH, NO.
PITY.
GOLITSYN?
--HEY!
I AM SORRY--
--BUT I CAN'T LET YOU WARN HER--
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT...?
--CAN'T LET HER GET AWAY, YOU SEE--
--IT'S MY MISSION YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND--
...OUT OF YOUR MIND...
--MY SECRET MISSION--
--WHAT THEY TOLD ME TO DO--
--NO WITNESSES NO ONE CAN KNOW--
--IT'S PART OF THE PLAN...

NIKKI?
THIS... THIS IS *NEW.*
MAYBE IT'S A *JOKE.*
PETRA?
PETRA, MY NAME IS CAPTAIN YELENA BELOVA. I NEED TO SPEAK WITH YOU ABOUT THE ***MURDER*** OF COLONEL PYOTR VASILIEVICH STARKOVSKY.
BAP! BAP!
LOCKED.
YOU HAVE A ***KEY?***
NOT ***ON*** ME, IT WOULD BE IN THE ***OFFICE--***
NEVER ***MIND.***

PETRA...

WHO... WHO *IS* HE...?
DETECTIVE. NAMED GOLITSYN.
HE WAS LOOKING INTO THE COLONEL'S ***MURDER.***
YOU DON'T...***NOT*** PETRA...
DID THE ***COLONEL*** EVER COME HERE?
NO, I DON'T ***THINK...***NO, HE WOULD HAVE NO ***REASON*** TO.
AT LEAST WE'VE ***FOUND*** THE MISSING ***FILES.***
Name: BELOVA, YELENA XXX
Designation: BLACK WIDOW
Sex: FEMALE
Hair: BLONDE
Eyes. BLUE
Height: 5 FT. 8 IN.
SECRET

YOU THINK SHE *DID* THIS?
OH MY *GOD*, YOU THINK SHE KILLED THEM *BOTH?*
DON'T *YOU?*
NO, NO, SHE *COULDN'T* HAVE, SHE--
LOOK *AROUND* YOU, NIKKI!
I THINK PETRA TOOK HER *ROLE* A LITTLE TOO *SERIOUSLY.*
BUT THAT'S *CRAZY!*
EVEN *IF* SHE WANTED TO *BE* YOU, WHY KILL STARKOVSKY?
BECAUSE SHE *ISN'T* ME.
AND COLONEL STARKOVSKY *KNEW* IT.
NIKKI...?
YOU'RE *WRONG.*

I DON'T WANT TO BE YOU.
YOU WANT TO BE ME.
PETRA.
YOU WANT TO BE THE BLACK WIDOW BUT YOU'RE NOT. YOU NEVER WILL BE.
PYOTR TOLD ME ABOUT YOU, HE TOLD ME ALL ABOUT YOU--
--ALL ABOUT YOUR FAILURES ABOUT HOW YOU COULDN'T BE HER HOW YOU COULDN'T ACCEPT THE NAME--
NIKKI DON'T MOVE--
--SHUT UP!
I KNOW, DON'T YOU SEE, I KNOW WHAT HE DIDN'T--
--YOU'RE NOTHING, YOU'RE AFRAID YOU CAN'T DO IT--
NO--
--BECAUSE IT'S ME, I'M HER, HE MADE ME HER--
--I AM BLACK WIDOW!
BLAMM

NGHUH
NO KEVLAR ON YOUR HEAD.
THE NEXT ONE KILLS YOU.
SAY IT.
WHA--
SAY IT!
SAY IT THE WAY HE SAID IT--

--THE WAY HE NEVER SAID IT TO YOU--
--THE WAY HE SAID IT WHEN HE WAS INSIDE ME--
HNN
--THE WAY HE SAID IT WHEN I LOVED HIM THE WAY YOU NEVER COULD--
--SAY IT!
CALL ME BLACK WIDOW.
GIVE ME THE NAME...
...OR DIE RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW.
NO.

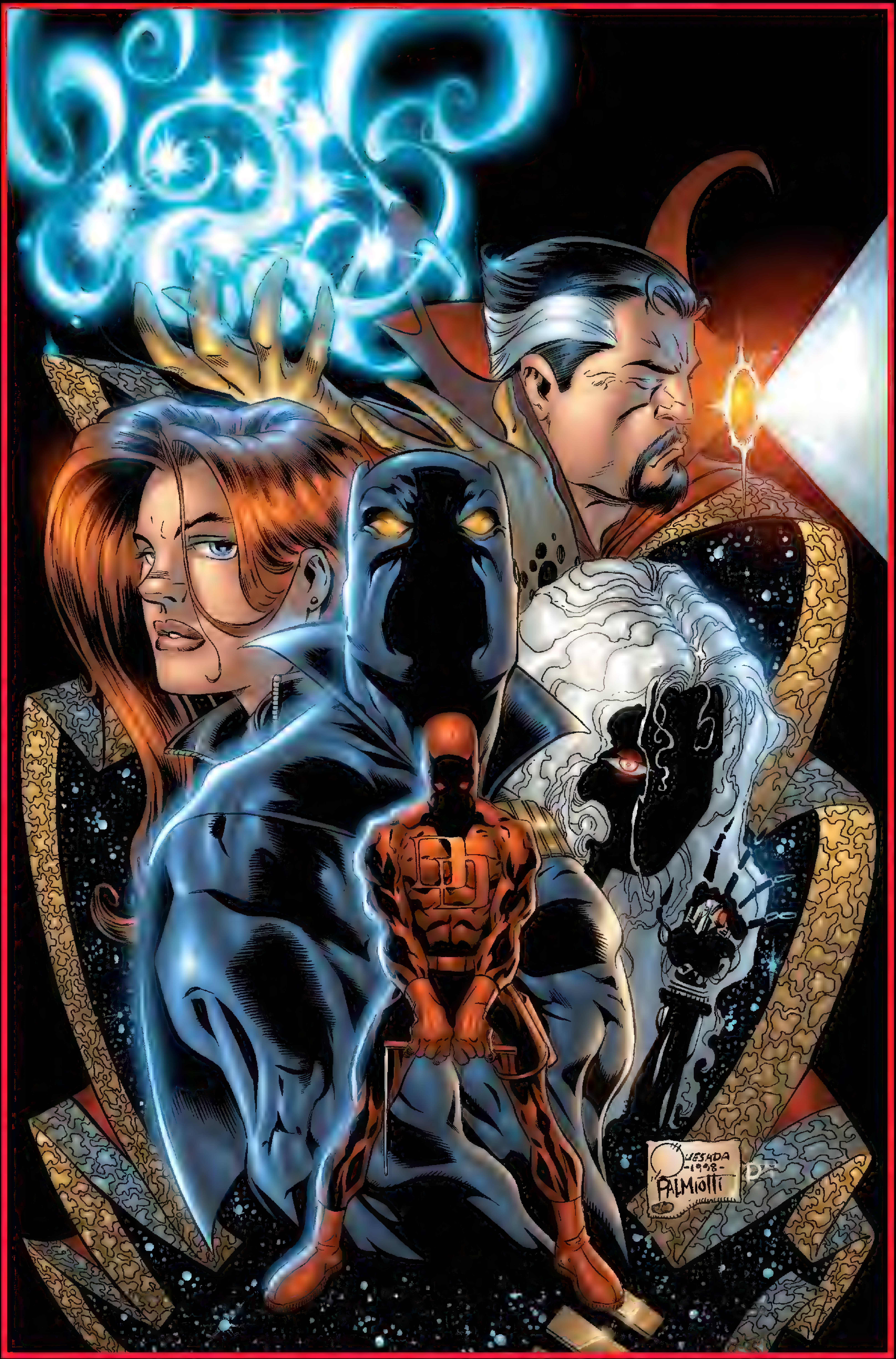
YOU CAN'T **HAVE** MY NAME.
HE GAVE IT TO ME.
AND YOU **TOOK** HIM FROM **ME.**

...HOLD STILL, YELENA!
YOUR HANDS ARE COLD, LIKA.
IF YOU STOPPED FIDGETING, IT WOULD BE OVER WITH ALREADY.
HOW'S IT FEEL?
ACHES.
NOT SURPRISED. EVEN WITH THE KEVLAR, YOU GOT LUCKY.
TAKE IT EASY ON YOUR RIBS.
YES, DOCTOR.
GENERAL TISCHENKO IS EXPECTING YOU IN THE RED ROOM.
YOU MIGHT WANT TO GET INTO UNIFORM, FIRST.
THEN I'LL NEED A NEW ONE OF THESE.

...AS *ORDERED*, GENERAL.
WHY AREN'T YOU IN *UNIFORM*, CAPTAIN BELOVA?
BEGGING THE GENERAL'S *PARDON*, BUT THIS *IS* MY *UNIFORM*.
AT *EASE*.
YOUR *REPORT*, IF YOU PLEASE, CAPTAIN.
UNDER THE GENERAL'S ORDERS I INVESTIGATED THE MURDER OF COLONEL STARKOVSKY AND THE POSSIBLE *THEFT* OF THE BLACK WIDOW FILES FROM THE COLONEL'S *OFFICE*.
THE MISSING *FILES* HAVE BEEN RECOVERED AND ARE IN THE *ENVELOPE* I HAVE JUST *DELIVERED* TO YOU.
THE *IDENTITY* OF HIS *KILLER* WAS DETERMINED TO BE A *WOMAN* WHO WORKED AT THE *CLUB*--FABRIKA--THAT THE COLONEL FREQUENTED.
THIS *WOMAN*, SHE'S IN *CUSTODY?*
NO, SIR.
THE WOMAN IN QUESTION HAD KILLED *TWO* MOSCOW C.I.D. *DETECTIVES* AS WELL AS COLONEL STARKOVSKY...

...WHEN I ATTEMPTED TO APPREHEND HER, SHE RESISTED WITH LETHAL FORCE.
I RESPONDED AS ACCORDING TO MY TRAINING.
YOU KILLED HER?
SHE LEFT ME NO CHOICE, SIR.
ADEQUATE, CAPTAIN BELOVA. REPORT TO ME OH-EIGHT-HUNDRED TOMORROW FOR BRIEFING. YOU'RE NEEDED IN CHECHNYA.
YOU ARE DISMISSED.
YES, SIR. THANK YOU, GENERAL.
YOU MAY COME IN.
WELL? IS SHE READY?

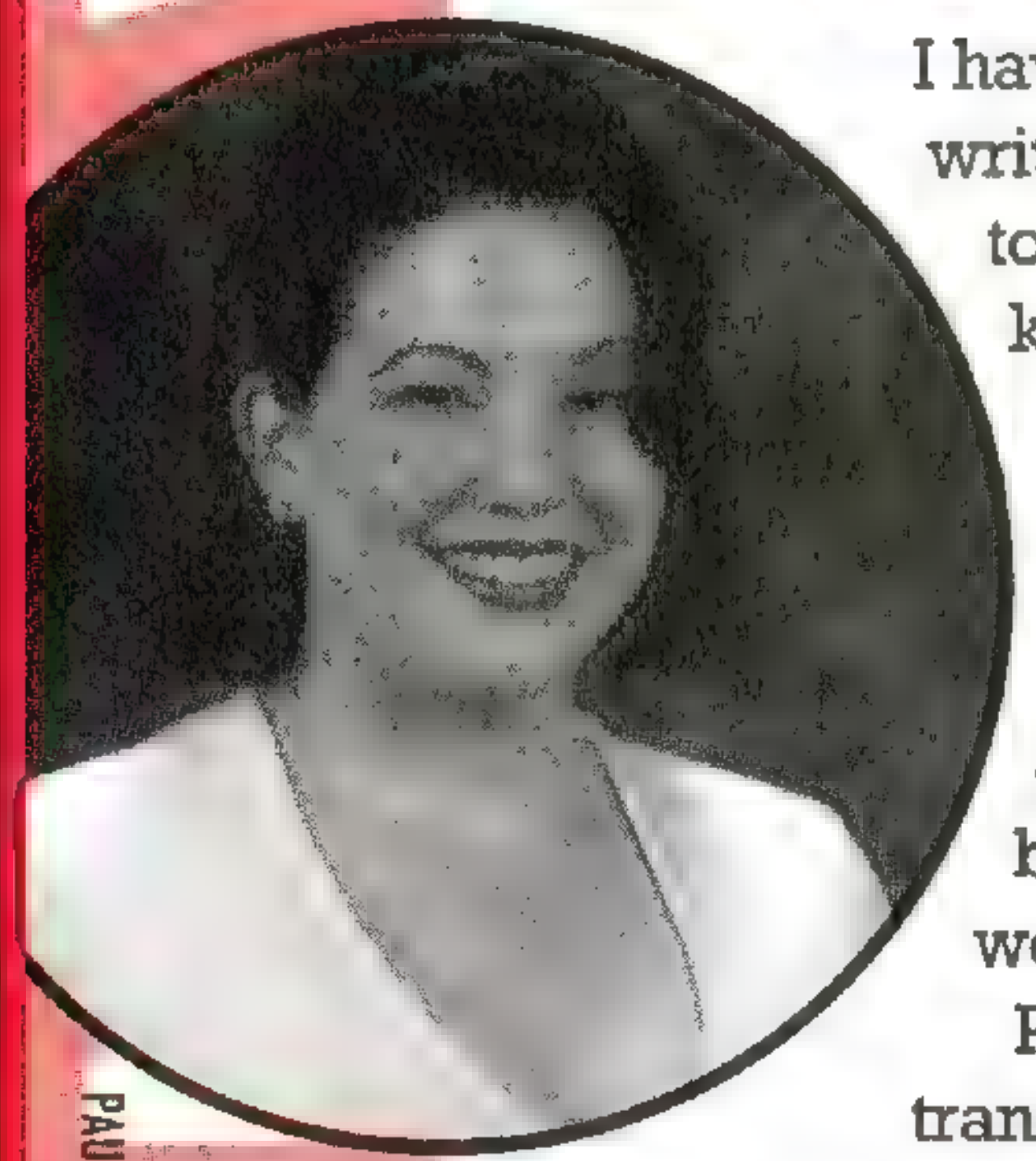
WITHOUT A DOUBT.
YOU'VE TAKEN CARE OF THE DETECTIVES?
THE BODIES WERE DUMPED BEFORE DAWN. IT'S UNFORTUNATE-- PETRA WAS MORE UNSTABLE THAN I HAD ANTICIPATED...
AS FOR CAPTAIN BELOVA, IT TOOK HER LONGER THAN I HAD HOPED BEFORE ASSERTING HERSELF AS THE BLACK WIDOW.
ONCE SHE DID, HOWEVER, SHE WAS FLAWLESS.
AND THE KILL?
NO HESITATION.
EXCELLENT WORK, CAPTAIN LUBYEV...
...OR WOULD YOU RATHER TO STILL BE CALLED NIKKI?
WAS THERE SOMETHING MORE?
SHE TRULY LOVED COLONEL STARKOVSKY, GENERAL.
IF SHE EVER LEARNS THAT THIS WAS ALL AN EXERCISE, THAT WE WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS DEATH, SHE COULD GO ROGUE.
YOU'LL HAVE TO KILL HER.
IF IT COMES TO THAT, CAPTAIN.
WE CAN ALWAYS MAKE ANOTHER BLACK WIDOW...
THE END


QUESADA
-1998-
PALMIOTTI
DK

JOE QUESADA, JIMMY PALMIOTTI & DAN KEMP

Marvel Knights Wave 2 Sketchbook

DEVIN GRAYSON ON:
BLACK WIDOW



PAUL SCHIRALDI

I have two primary rules by which I guide myself through professional comic writing: Rule #1 is to not let myself get typecast as a "chick writer," and Rule #2 is to do any work requested of me by Joe Quesada and/or Jimmy Palmiotti, 'cause no kidding, those guys know up from down.

Rule #1 has been tricky. Well-meaning fans and editors alike frequently approach me with long lists of exclusively female characters they'd like to see me tackle. And although I appreciate being thought of, and agree that there's a need for more well-drawn female characters in mainstream comics, I'm guarded about limiting the ways in which my work is evaluated and perceived by becoming too closely associated with too narrow a work docket. In other words: I don't wanna just do, well, GIRL stuff.

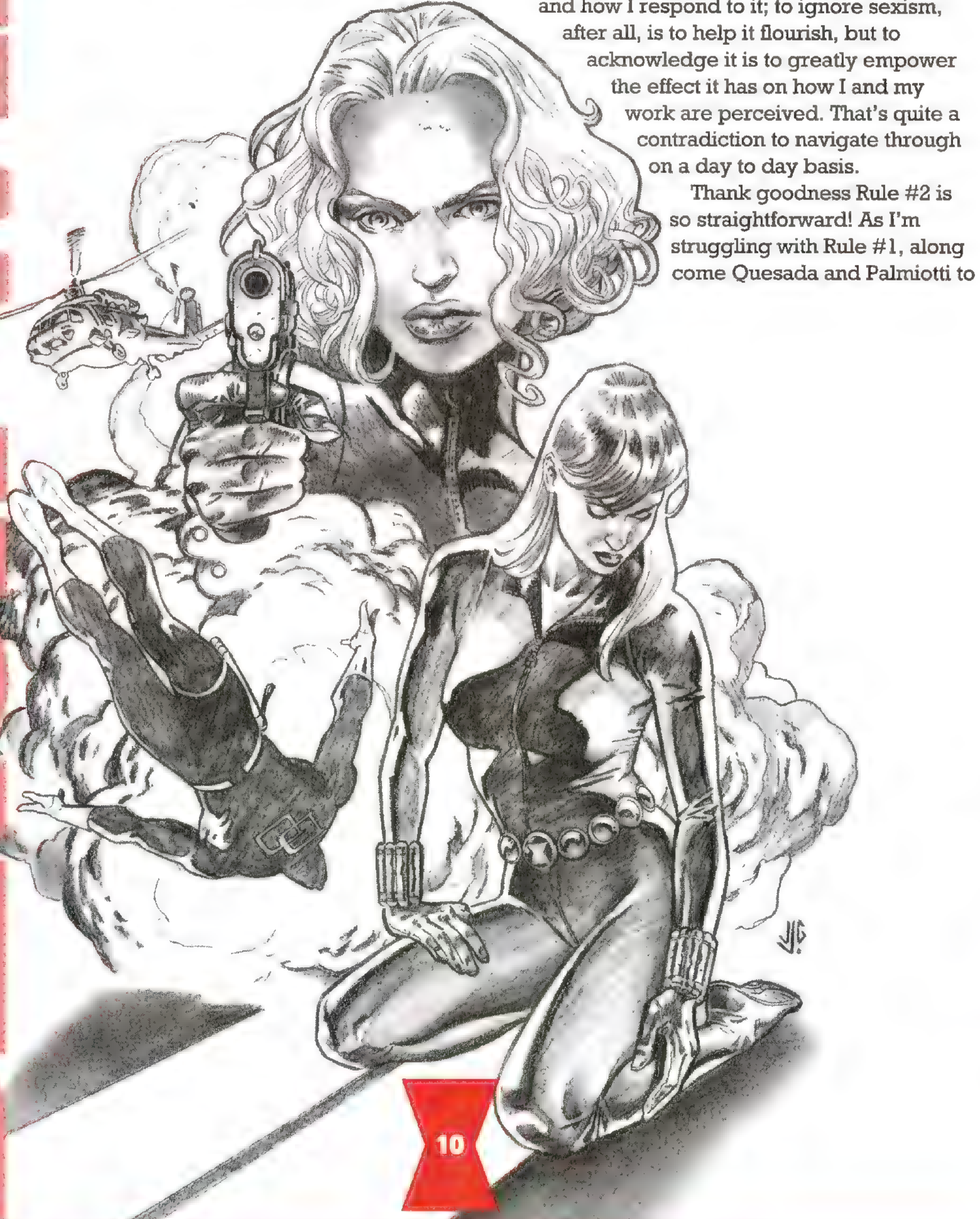
Personally, I firmly believe that writers are people who can, and must, attempt to transgress the boundaries of race, creed and gender in their work. Politically, I know that my being female means that I have to be extra-careful about gender bias and how I respond to it; to ignore sexism, after all, is to help it flourish, but to acknowledge it is to greatly empower the effect it has on how I and my work are perceived. That's quite a contradiction to navigate through on a day to day basis.

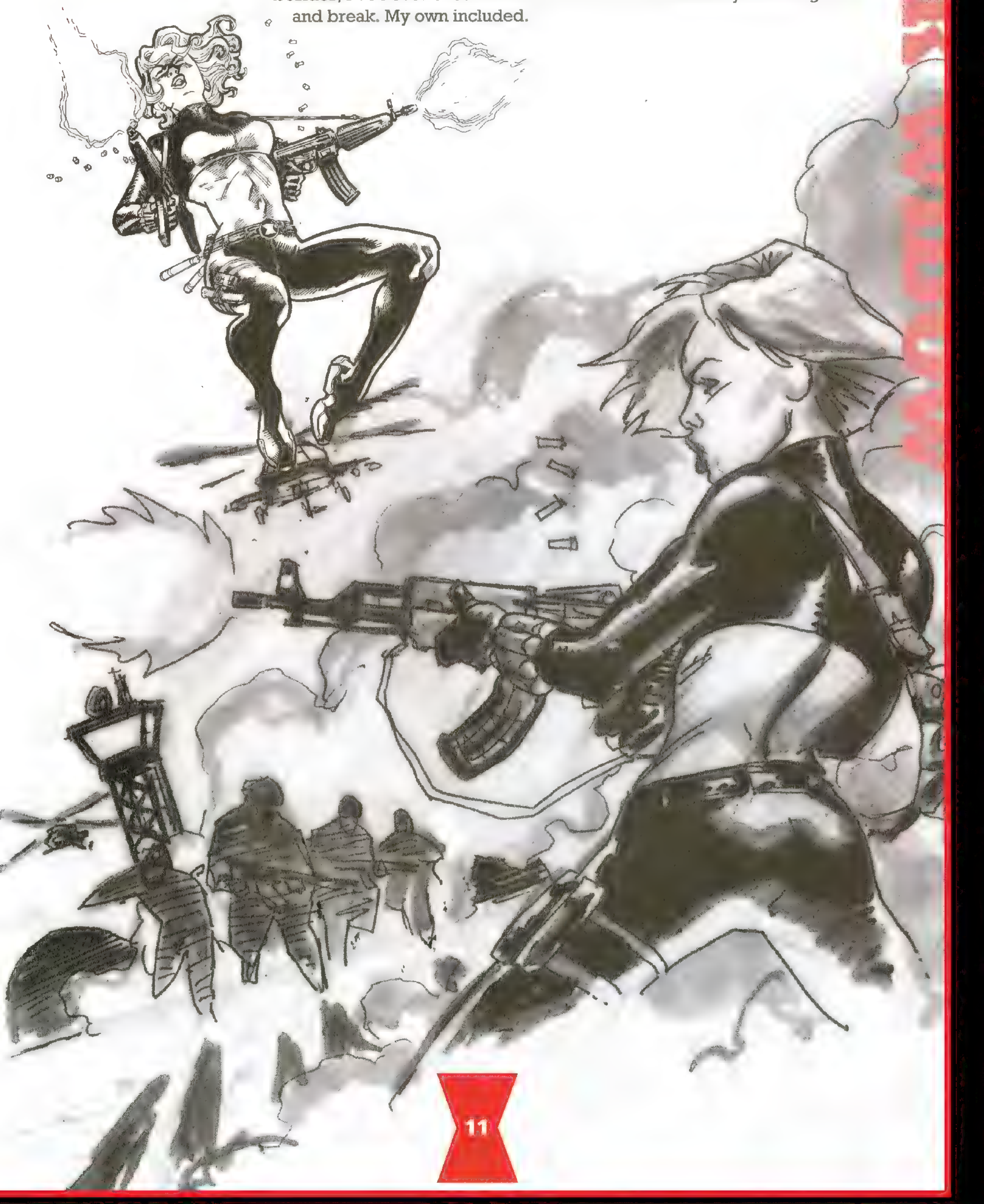
Thank goodness Rule #2 is so straightforward! As I'm struggling with Rule #1, along come Quesada and Palmiotti to offer me work—with a female character. ARGH! I can't do this, right? I mean, I'm already on DC's *Catwoman*; if my first work at Marvel is with a FEMALE…

But it's not just ANY female character.

It's BLACK WIDOW, one of the absolute, hands-down, coolest characters anywhere. Plus, they've got J. G. Jones lined up to spin his magic over the art chores, and the story was to be of my own choosing. Man, I have to do this, right? I mean how could I say no to Quesada and Palmiotti? I even have a RULE about that! But how to reconcile the assignment with rule number one?

Enter Rule #3: if you DO work on a female character, make sure the work, and the character, kick SERIOUS ass! Black Widow has never shirked from an assignment on the basis of being a woman, and so in her honor, this time at least, neither will I. I think that's personally and politically sound, and besides, I've never once heard a rule I didn't immediately want to go out and break. My own included.





J.G. JONES ON:

BLACK WIDOW

When Jimmy Palmiotti and Joe Quesada first asked me to work on *Black Widow*, they said, "You'd be an idiot if you didn't do this book!" I was already talking to another Marvel competitor about penciling a year-long project.

Me, I'm like, "A year! I'll be able to eat for a year!"

"Nah, you don't want to do that, come work for us."

"I don't want to eat for a year?"

"Nah, forget about it! We're offering you a chance to do your own thing—pencil, ink, wash tones. AND you get to draw not one, but TWO beautiful women. Does the term 'cat-fight' mean anything to you?"

"The Widows wear black vinyl cat suits, right? I don't have to draw any quilted costumes over and over, do I?"

"You got it!"

"Sign me up. I mean, I'd be an idiot not to jump at a chance like this, right?"

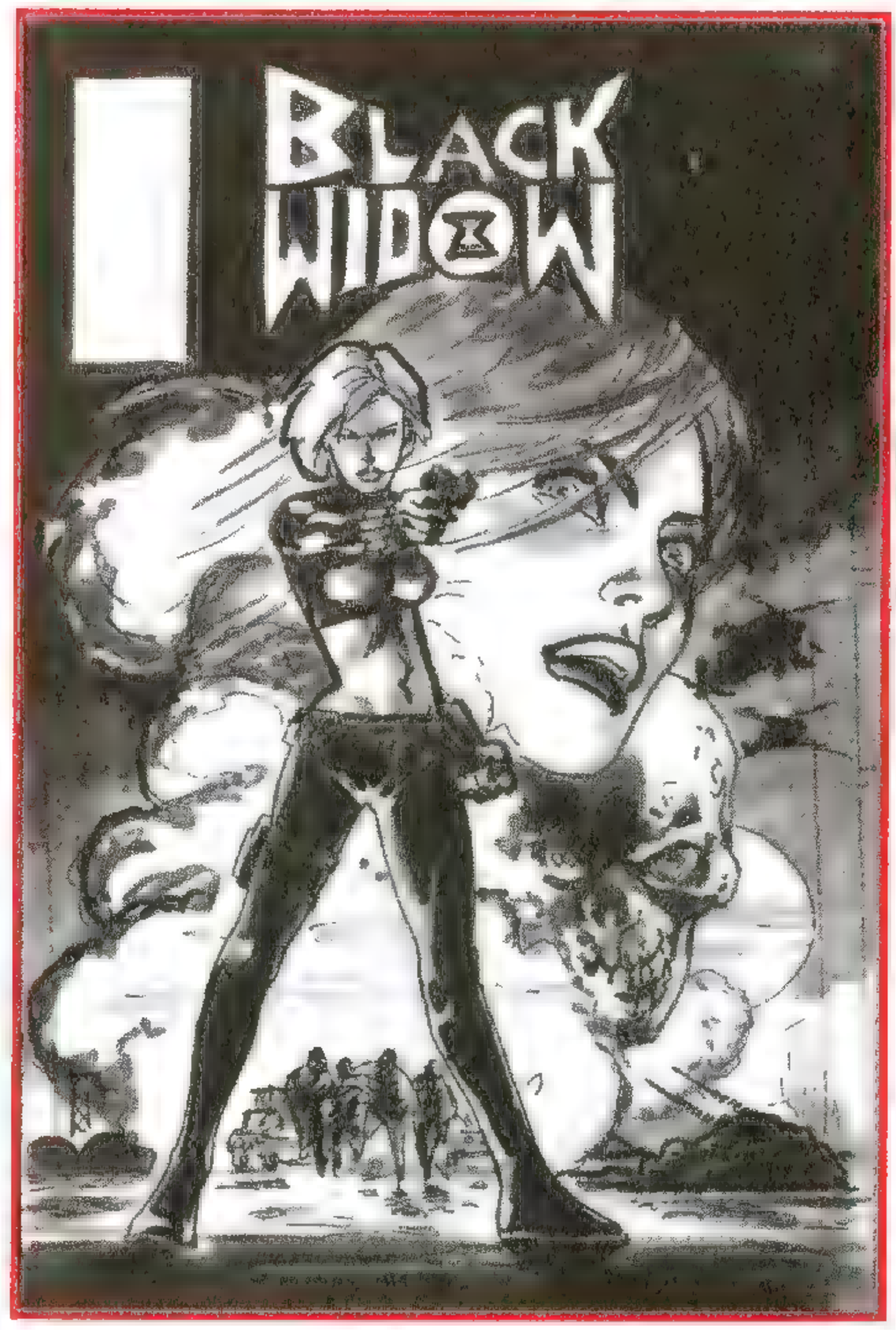
Let me tell you, that was the best decision I've made in a long time. Working on this book has been terrific. Quesada and Palmiotti have entrusted me with a great spy thriller by the ever-gracious Devin Grayson. It's more than just an action adventure fist-fest—this is a story with heart. Some of the greatest talents in comics before me have worked their magic on Black Widow, so I have been sweating blood to produce a book that I hope will stand up to the test of time.

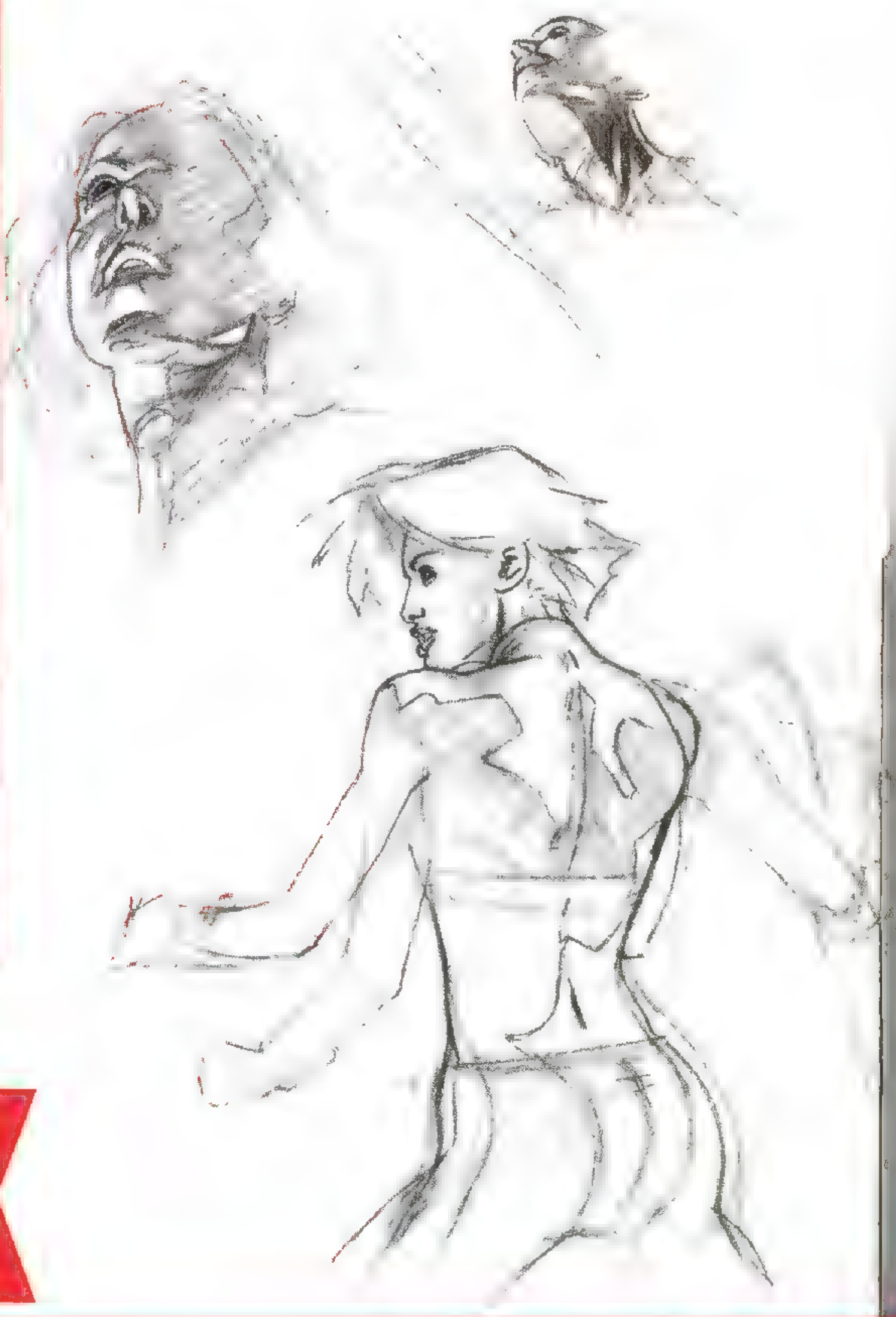
"So what am I supposed to do about food for the next year?"

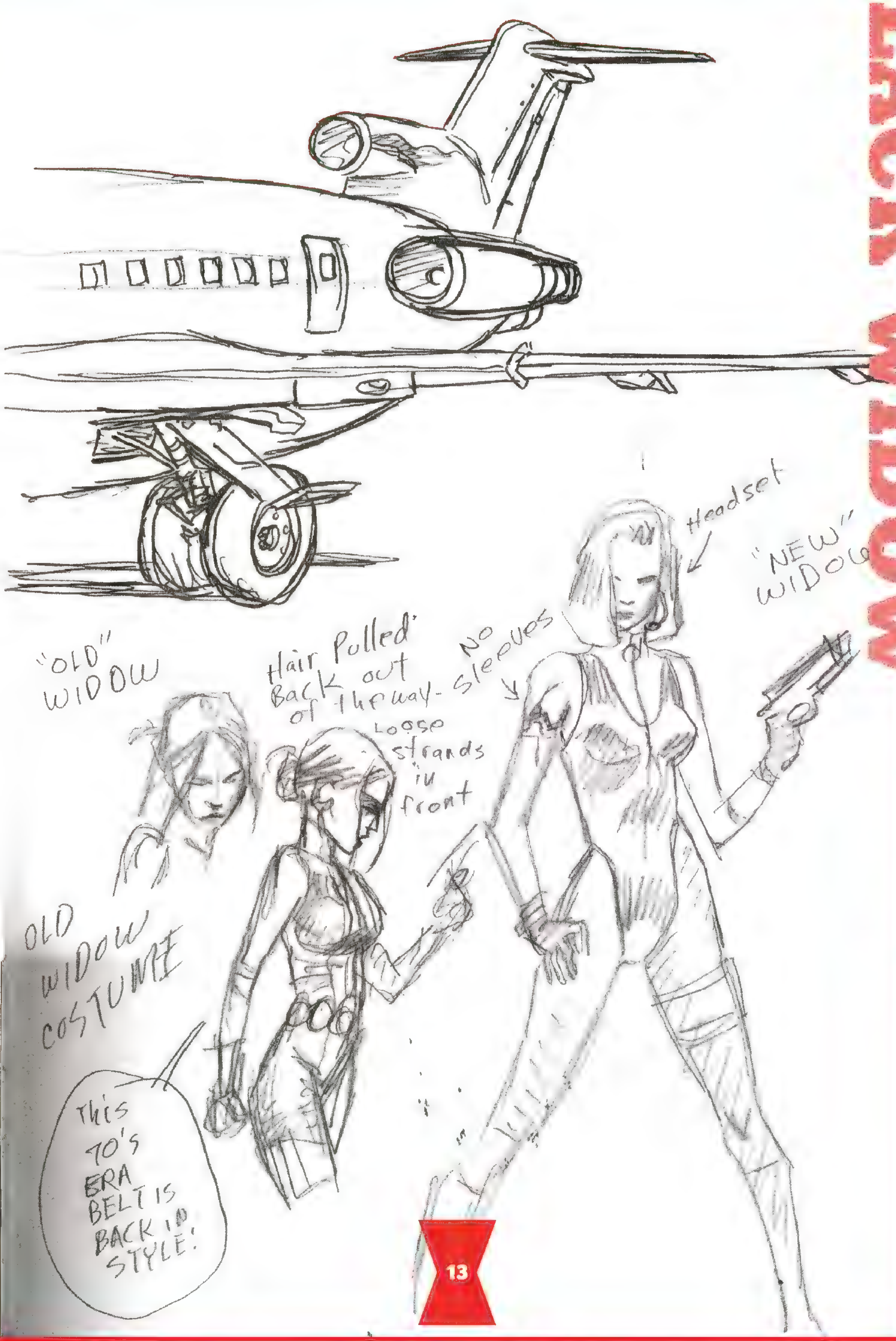
"Okay, we'll pay you."

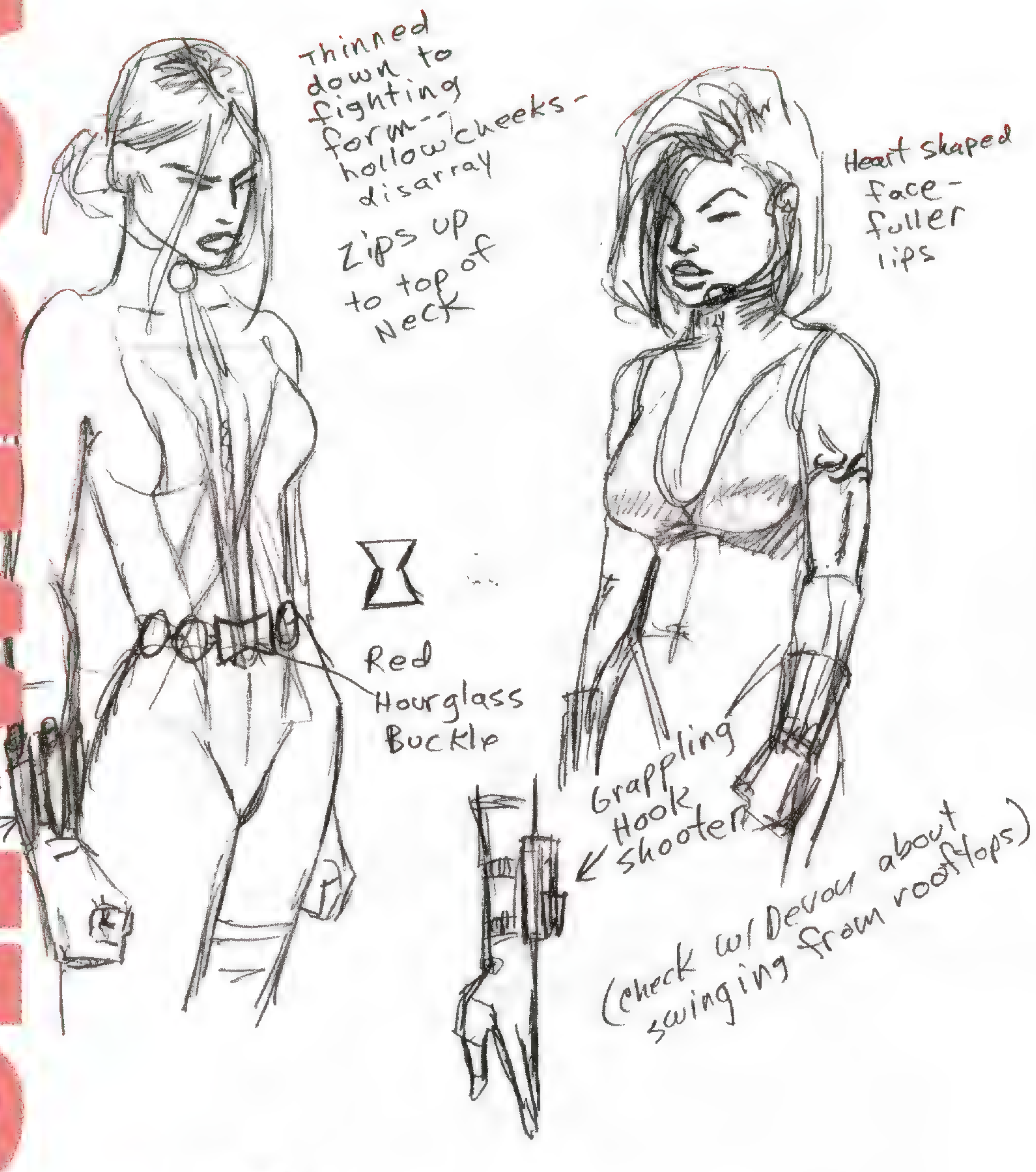
"You'll PAY me?"

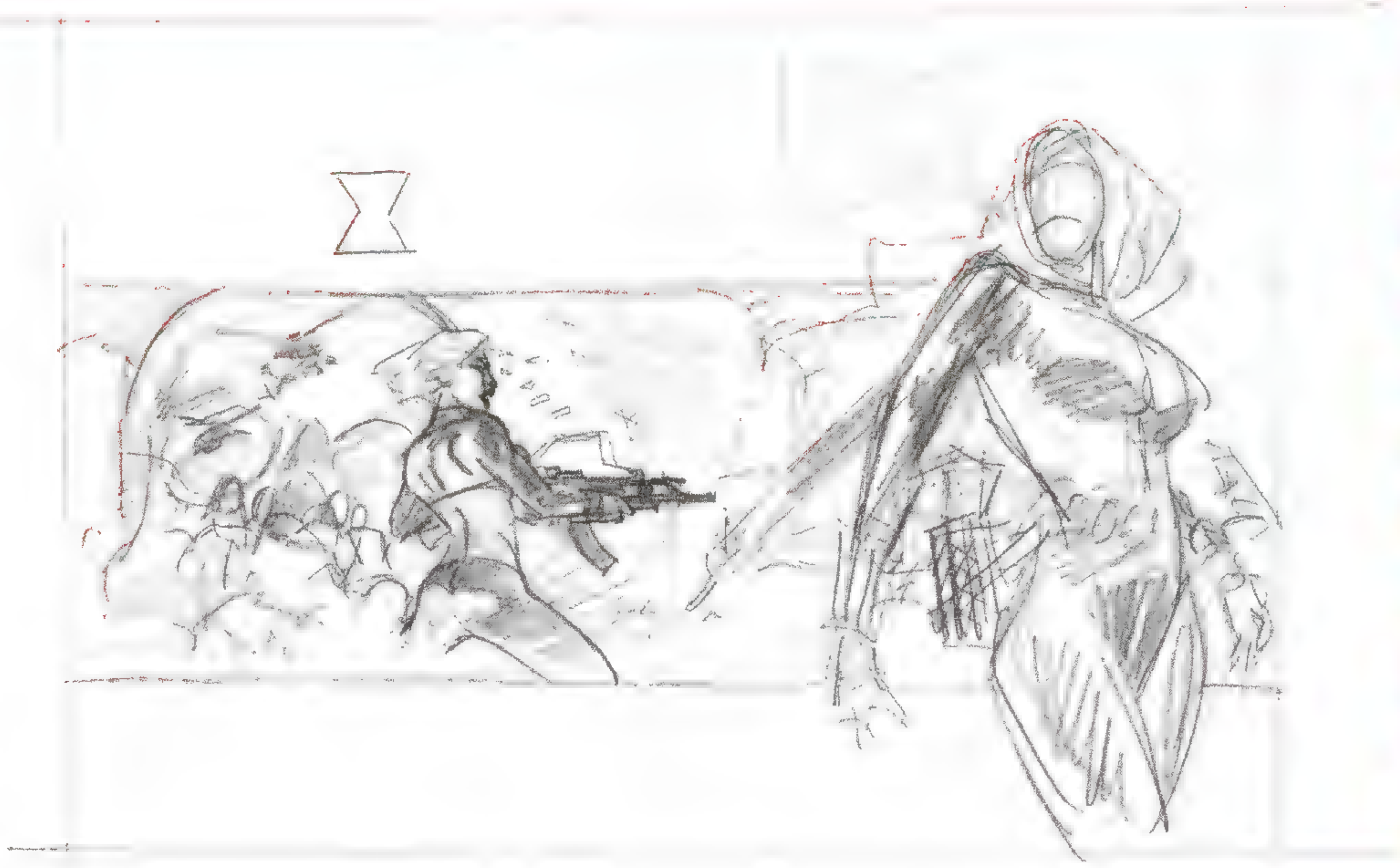
"Yeah. Now shut up and draw."

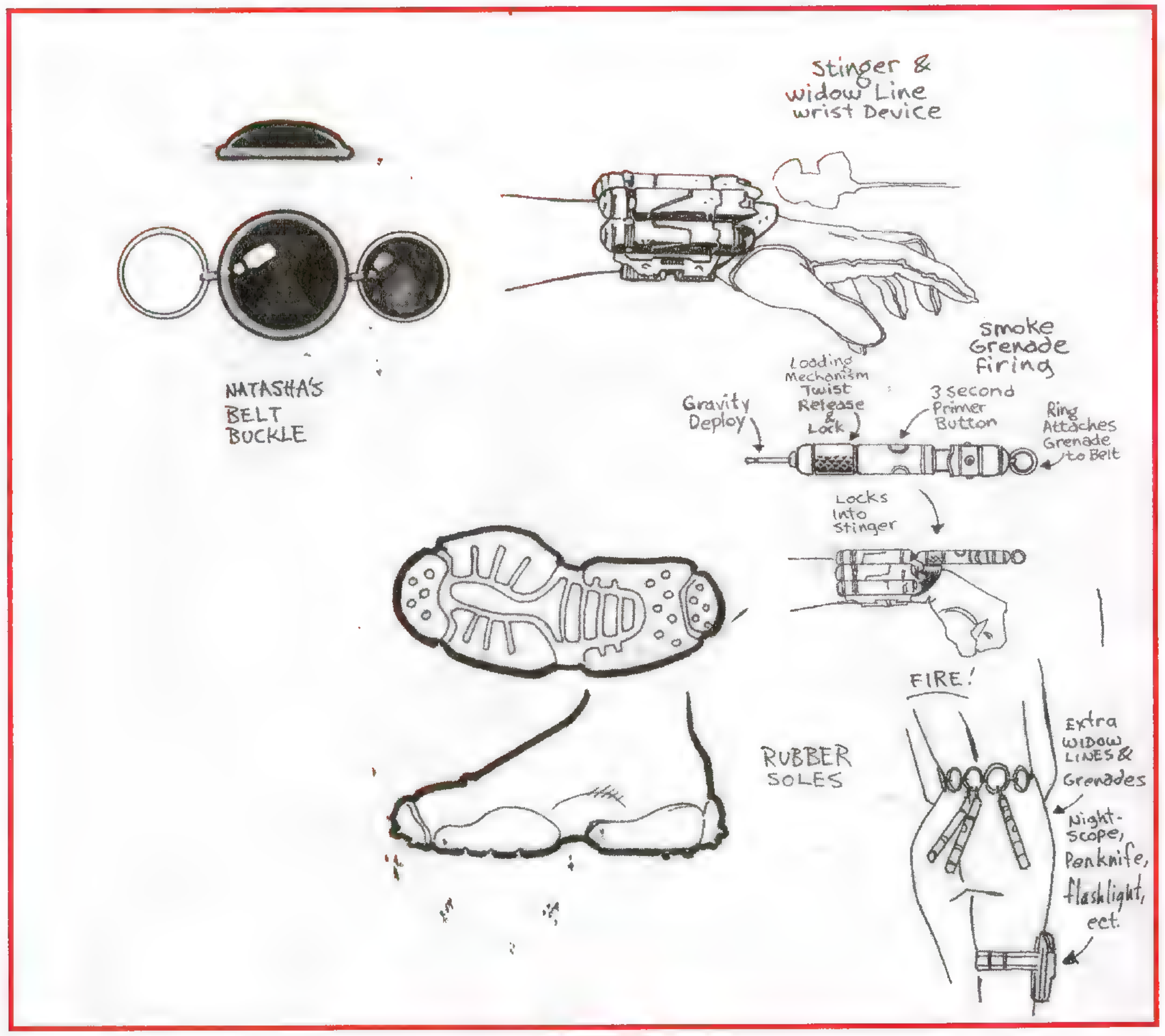

BLACK WIDOW

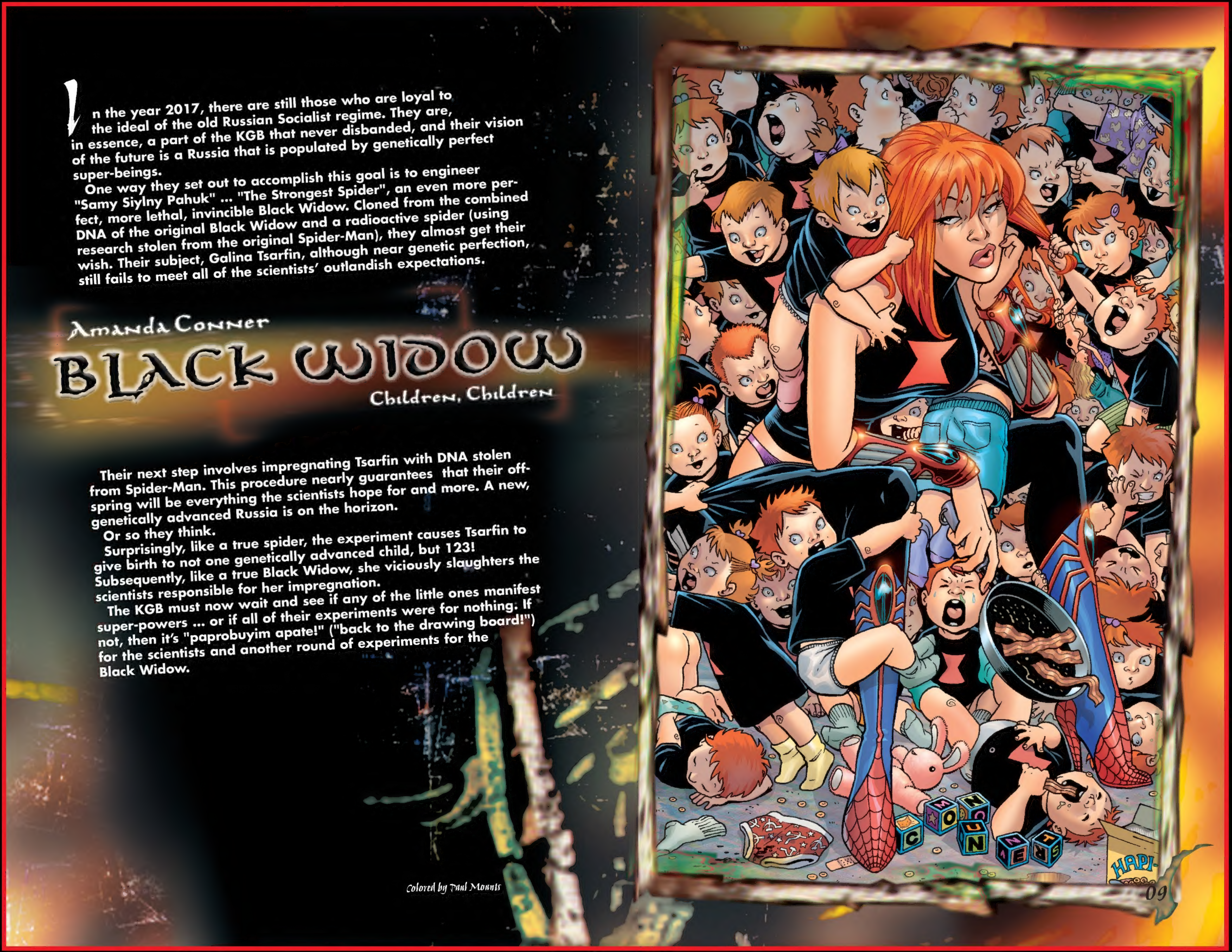



Headset
"NEW" WIDOW
"OLD" WIDOW
Hair Pulled Back out of the way-
No sleeves
Loose strands in front
OLD WIDOW COSTUME
This 70's ERA BELT IS BACK in STYLE!


Thinned down to fighting form-- hollow cheeks - disarray
Zips up to top of Neck
Heart shaped face - fuller lips
Red Hourglass Buckle
ROWING
NIVES
?
Grappling Hook shooter
(check w/ Devon about swinging from rooftops)




Stinger & widow Line wrist Device
NATASHA'S BELT BUCKLE
Smoke Grenade Firing
Gravity Deploy
Loading Mechanism Twist Release & Lock
3 second Primer Button
Ring Attaches Grenade to Belt
Locks Into Stinger
FIRE!
RUBBER SOLES
Extra WIDOW LINES & Grenades
Night-scope, Penknife, flashlight, ect.



In the year 2017, there are still those who are loyal to the ideal of the old Russian Socialist regime. They are, in essence, a part of the KGB that never disbanded, and their vision of the future is a Russia that is populated by genetically perfect super-beings.

One way they set out to accomplish this goal is to engineer "Samy Siylny Pahuk" ... "The Strongest Spider", an even more perfect, more lethal, invincible Black Widow. Cloned from the combined DNA of the original Black Widow and a radioactive spider (using research stolen from the original Spider-Man), they almost get their wish. Their subject, Galina Tsarfin, although near genetic perfection, still fails to meet all of the scientists' outlandish expectations.

Amanda Conner

BLACK WIDOW

Children, Children

Their next step involves impregnating Tsarfin with DNA stolen from Spider-Man. This procedure nearly guarantees that their offspring will be everything the scientists hope for and more. A new, genetically advanced Russia is on the horizon.

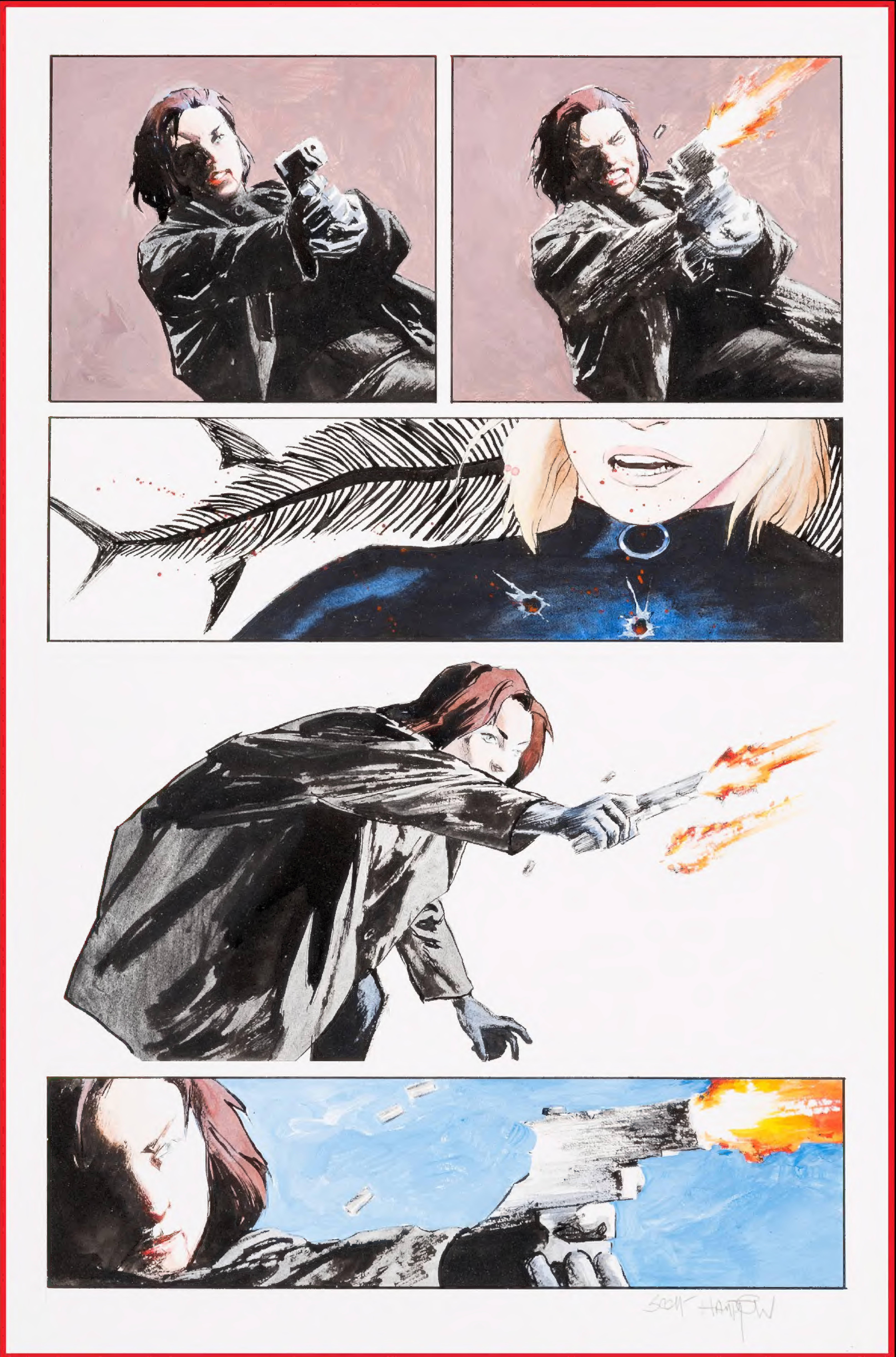
Or so they think.

Surprisingly, like a true spider, the experiment causes Tsarfin to give birth to not one genetically advanced child, but 123! Subsequently, like a true Black Widow, she viciously slaughters the scientists responsible for her impregnation.

The KGB must now wait and see if any of the little ones manifest super-powers ... or if all of their experiments were for nothing. If not, then it's "paprobuyim apate!" ("back to the drawing board!") for the scientists and another round of experiments for the Black Widow.

Colored by Paul Mounts

The *Marvel Knights: Millennial Visions* one-shot reimagined many of the Marvel Knights characters, including the Black Widow, in creative new ways.



SCOTT HAMPTON

Black Widow (2001) #1, page 21 art

WAR OF THE WIDOWS!

Natasha Romanoff has always led a life of adventure. A former Soviet spy, she defected to the West and became a super hero and Avenger. Natasha has earned a reputation as a consummate professional, coldly efficient and deadly as her namesake. But now her time as Black Widow may be running out! Yelena Belova is the first student in the history of the Red Room to exceed Natasha's skills — and now she's gunning for the mantle she feels was stolen from her. And she's determined to put Natasha in the grave! Prepare for a fight that will rage from the Middle East's deserts to New York's Upper West Side. And explore the history of the "pale little spider" in a never-before-collected tale!

EXPLICIT CONTENT

Black Widow (1999) **#1-3,**
Black Widow (2001) **#1-3**
and **Black Widow: Pale Little Spider #1-3**

ZONE